



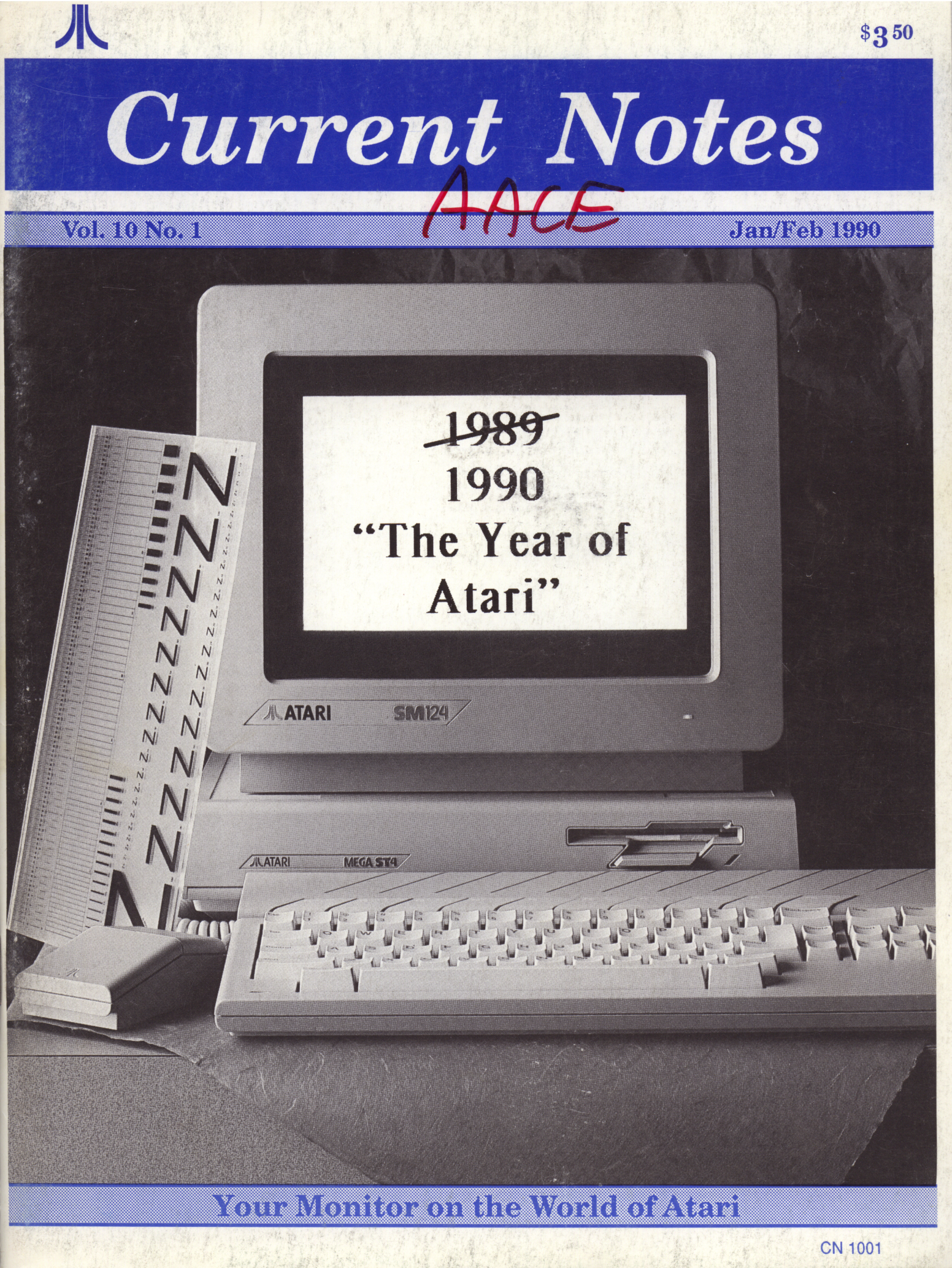
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# Current Notes

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Vol. 10 No. 1

Jan/Feb 1990



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## Current Notes

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### A Bit of CN History

This issue, Volume 10, No. 1, marks the start of the 10th year of *Current Notes*. Imagine that! The first issue, Volume 1, No. 1, of *Current Notes* (unnamed at the time) was published in May 1981. The six-page "No-Name Newsletter for the new (and also No-Name) ATARI Users' Group of Northern Virginia" was created by its first editor, Paul Chapin. The club had 25 initial members. The next two issues, four pages each in June and July, remained unnamed as did the user group itself. By the fourth issue in September (even in the very beginning there was no August issue), the (still nameless) newsletter was distributed to the group of Atari fans in Virginia and another group forming in the District of Columbia. Paul Chapin lived in Northern Virginia but worked in D.C., in the very building where the new D.C. group for forming. It seemed to only make sense for both groups to share the same newsletter.

By October, the Northern Virginia group had finally settled on a name (NOVATARI) as had the D.C. Group (AC/DC). The name "Current Notes" appeared, finally, in the 7-page November, 1981 issue. The name was created by Paul Chapin who simply combined the column titles of each of the two individual club reports: "AC/DC Currents" and "NOVATARI Notes" to create the name of the newsletter.

Paul's reign as editor lasted about two and a half years. In October of 1983, he turned the newsletter over to a new, young, editor, Staffan Sandberg. Staffan's first step was to enlarge the size of the newsletter from a 7 x 9 inch format to an 8.5 by 11 inch page. His first issue was 8 pages. Staffan doubled the November and December issues to 16 pages each. In January of 1984, I agreed to help Staffan by writing a regular column, called "Basic Beat," that provided instruction to budding new BASIC programmers. In February, Staffan sent out his first second-class issue. He had discovered that CN could be mailed at second-class postage rates, which were considerably cheaper than first-class postage. However, there was a catch. The minimum size of the publication had to be 24 pages, a considerable jump over earlier sizes, and more meticulous records had to be kept. Staffan did a couple more issues but, eventually, found the combined demands of full-time study, part-time work, and newsletter editor a bit too demanding to handle.

So, with the May 1984 issue, I took over the job of newsletter editor. That issue was 28 pages and had a circulation of 400 copies. Producing that many pages every month seemed like quite a challenge, after all, just where was one to get Atari news? I scaled back the frequency to 10 times a year at that point. Staffan had

already missed a month and with the post office we had to be consistent. Besides, I suspected that this was going to be a lot of work and I wanted to leave a couple months off as a sort of cushion.

And then we started growing and changing. I enjoy creating things and I was curious to see just how good the newsletter could become. As long as we kept getting better, there was always a challenge in doing the newsletter and that's what I enjoyed.

By the end of that year, the issue was 32 pages, five Atari clubs were receiving *Current Notes* as their club newsletter, circulation was about 500, and I had also assumed the duties of President of NOVATARI. I created the Washington Area Atari Computer Enthusiasts, a loose federation of the five clubs, primarily to serve as the "publisher" of *Current Notes*. By the end of 1985, we were up to 52 pages and over 2,000 copies.

By the end of the following year, 1986, WAACE had sponsored, successfully, its very first Atarifest. *Current Notes* had grown to 68 pages and the circulation was about 3,000. As CN continued to grow, it required more work than any sane "volunteer" would do. In addition, as we became bigger so, too, did the financial risks become greater. So in 1987, Current Notes, Inc. was formed and by the end of the year, we were producing 80 pages with a circulation near 4,000. My wife, Joyce, who is not a computer fanatic, was pressed into doing "part-time" work for CN.

Eighty pages takes a *lot* of work. In fact, it was about the limit of what I could reasonably put together in my "spare time" in a one-month period. Indeed, I was putting in 40 hours a week just working on CN. (As some of you know, I also have a full-time job with one of those secret government agencies.) So, for the last two years, even though I have held the size of the newsletter relatively stable (while circulation has grown slowly), Joyce has had to expand her hours to full-time work. She handles all the finances (including taxes!) as well as advertising and store sales. Be nice to her. If I had to handle taxes and all that paperwork, CN would quickly become history!

Well, here we are at the start of CN's 10th and my 6th year. We have *nearly* completed an addition to our house just to handle *Current Notes* (should have been done by Dec. 18, but that's a nightmare you don't want to hear about!) We have switched to another (our fourth) printer and the size of this issue, 84 pages counting the cover, will be the standard size for 1990. CN is sponsoring an online category on GENIE and the CN library has been put on CD-ROM (separate untold story there). I'm not sure what else is in store for 1990, but, I assure you, the challenge is still there. I'm looking forward to another year.



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Goldstar M-2D 5.25 (10 pcs)	\$ 4.99
Diskfile 10 Disk Holder	\$ .99
ST	
HiSoft Basic	\$39.99
Alice Pascal	\$39.99

## St \$10.00 Specials

Road Runner, Gridiron, Impossible Mission, Trail Blazer, Deep Space, Time Link, Perfect Match, Stuff, Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom, Rambo III, Gauntlet, Road Raider, Willow, Combat Course, Casino Gambling



## ✓Entertainment

□Adv Dungeons and Dragons	\$29.99	□Obliterator	\$19.99
□Axe of Rage	\$19.99	□O.I.D.S.	\$27.99
□Battle Chess	\$35.99	□Omega	\$32.99
□Battle Hawk 142	\$34.99	□Phantasy I,II, or III	\$29.99
□Bloodwych	\$35.99	□Pictionary	\$35.99
□Bloodwych Data Disk	\$21.99	□Pirates	\$29.99
□Bubble Bobble	\$19.99	□Police Quest I or II	\$35.99
□California Games	\$29.99	□Populous	\$39.99
□Dive Bomber	\$21.99	□Populous Data Disk	\$19.99
□Double Dragon	\$29.99	□Red Storm Rising	\$32.99
□Dungeon Master I or II	\$25.99	□Scrabble	\$29.99
□Empire	\$39.99	□Shadowgate	\$39.99
□F-15 Strike Eagle	\$29.99	□Space Quest I, II, or III	\$35.99
□F-16 Combat Pilot	\$35.99	□Star Command	\$37.99
□F40 Pursuit	\$29.99	□Star Fleet I	\$37.99
□Falcon	\$32.99	□Star Wars	\$29.99
□Fighter Bomber	\$37.99	□Street Fighter	\$29.99
□Gauntlet II	\$39.99	□TechnoCop	\$29.99
□King's Quest IV	\$39.99	□Time of Lore	\$29.99
□Kult	\$39.99	□Turbo Outrun	\$27.99
□Leasure Suit Larry I or II	\$32.99	□Ultima IV	\$39.99
□Manhunter NY II	\$35.99	□Uninvited	\$39.99
□MicroLeague Baseball II	\$39.99		

## ✓St Hardware

□* 520 ST or 1040 ST	
2 Meg Upgrade INSTALLED	\$399.99
4 Meg Upgrade INSTALLED	\$599.99
<b>*Price varies due to Ram Prices</b>	
<b>old style 520 ST/1040 Boards</b>	
□Fast Accelerator Board Installed	\$289.99
□PC Speed Installed	\$399.99
□JRI Board	\$100.00
INSTALLED	\$150.00
□CMI Board	\$200.00
INSTALLED	\$275.00
□JATO COLOR BOARD	\$ 75.00

## Please Ask About Guarantee

□520 ST or 1040 ST with monochrome with color	CALL
□Mega 2 or 4 Mb with monochrome with color	CALL
□128k ROMs for Mac	\$150.00
□IRS232C or Centronics cable	\$ 9.99
□ICD 50 Mb Hard Drive	\$699.99
□Supra 60 Mb Hard Drive	\$895.00
□Atari 60 Mb Hard Drive	\$749.99

## ✓Drawing Programs

□CyberControl	\$39.99
□CyberPaint	\$39.99
□CyberStudio (CAD 2.0)	\$59.99
□CyberPrint	\$29.99
□Easy Draw/Turbo Charger	\$99.99
□Easel ST	\$17.99
□Graph Maker	\$49.99
□Quatum Paint Box	\$19.99
□Spectrum 512	\$49.99
□Art and Film Director	\$49.99
□Touch-Up	119.99
□Hand Scanner & Touch-Up	399.99







## **The Dream**

### **An Open Letter to Atari, Dealers, and Users**

The Atari engineering department continues to produce astounding machinery. The STE and TT are well improved machines in a mature environment. Atari is also doing very well fiscally. A lot of Atari's current financial success is due to the Atari Portfolio. The world's smallest MSDOS computer has captured the imagination of computer aficionados world wide.

Both the STACY Transportable and the TT have a very classy feel and give an experienced user the feeling of almost unlimited power. At last Atari's video resolution is second to none in the microcomputer market. If the TT does, indeed, release in a timely manner at less than \$2,000 and if the STACY is priced at \$1,495 for the basic floppy system, the pledge of "Power without the Price" will be truly fulfilled.

In fact, Atari has a virtual plethora of equipment and third party support for this equipment is substantial. From Parsec boards, to Mac and IBM adaptors, to Calamus, Pagestream, and Ultrascript, as well as music sequencing and sampling, point of sale systems, and even dedicated industrial control Mega ST's, there is no dearth of niche development for our machine which has somewhat disappointing sales figures.

This brings us to the crux of the problem. In my opinion, the Atari ST/TT line is the broadest base of technically superior hardware available from any company. But every major computer company has an Achilles' Heel. IBM's is their graphic performance. They just aren't fun machines, and there are too many graphic standards. The Mac's is price coupled with a black and white standard which is dominant on their machines. The Amiga's problems are poor resolution and some doubt about the financial stability of Commodore. Tandy has a poor image due to their Radio Shack heritage and current IBM compatible technology. Atari has one major problem. Marketing. All of our minor problems stem from this basic flaw.

The public attitude needs to be changed. Atari has tried various outside agencies including, recently, a division of Chiat Day, the advertising agency credited with Apple's success. They lasted about thirty days. Frequently, Atari has mounted in-house campaigns. These have been dismal. Some of the promotions have been enticing; all of the hardware is desirable, and potentially well-supported. The one thing Atari has not been able to come up with is a campaign to inspire the masses.

I suggest that perhaps because of the owners coming from Canada, they misunderstand some aspect of the American market. We must certainly compliment the Tramiel family on what they do well. Atari is financially stable, and it was on the verge of ruin when they took over

it. The ST consistently offers the most bang for the buck and is, in my opinion, the wonder machine of the decade.

On the other hand, the American dollar is spent on fads. The hula hoop, Davy Crockett, Nehru jackets, Pet Rocks, and Apple Macintoshes are all fads. The Atari ST has not become a fad because it has not been advertised properly.

I know this may sound self aggrandizing, but after four years as an Atari ST dealer, having to battle to survive as Jack Tramiel did in the marketplace, I am more in touch with users, user groups, developers and the American public than any Atari corporate officer. In fact, I studied American Culture through graduate and post graduate school and have a degree in Anthropology. That I chose an economic life of marketing Atari is partially a testimony to the cultural change computers are wreaking in our lives and partially due to Atari's accessibility, both in ease of use and availability for less money. What makes Atari inaccessible is the lack of knowledge of their product by the American public.

I say we can change that. One way is by supporting "The Revolution," Don Thomas' ideas on the users selling the brand. The second is hiring me as consultant or marketing specialist for Atari. In one year's time we can double Atari's dealers and quadruple Atari's ST sales in the U.S. with judicious advertising at a percentage of gross specified by Atari. Jack Tramiel and Sam Tramiel told me 10 percent. I submit that under my direction, Atari can spend 8-10 percent on advertising, reach 10 times as many people, quadruple sales, and create the public image necessary to set the ST as a new standard firmly in the American economy.

If you feel as I do that Atari's major shortcoming is in its public relations, from the general public, through dealer and user group organizations, then I am asking you to write Jack Tramiel, the Chairman of the Board, to give us, the Atari users a chance to market their machine with me as the coach with certain powers in their company. This is not some kind of a takeover or assertion of democracy in action. After all, Atari is a family-run company. I'm just suggesting that this one aspect of business could be managed better by me as someone coming up from the ranks. After all, when queried about marketing at COMDEX last week, Leonard Tramiel said, "What marketing?"

If you support this move to better market the ST/TT line please write: Jack Tramiel, Chairman of the Board, Atari Corporation, 1196 Borregas Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, and say: I'd like to see Atari ST/TT machines more widely sold and used. I think Bill Yerger has some good ideas. Why don't you give him a try?

Thanks,  
Bill Yerger  
Owner Zephyr/Microworld

## **EZRAM Not Terrific**

Dear Current Notes,

I bought my ST in 1987. A while later, I bought the EZRAM memory expansion board. A whole meg, wow! It was easy to install and if there were problems, help was a phone call away.

Shift to the recent past. I decided to upgrade again, this time to 2.5 megs. Since EZRAM had another board and since I had good experience with them, this is the board I chose. I had a few questions so a quick letter to Terrific Corporation was in order. This was answered shortly, with suggestions as to where to obtain 1 meg chips. Best of all, EZRAM II was on sale! Well, I planned to install *pc-ditto II*, so I called Terrific to make sure everything would fit. A message on their machine gave a number to call for technical assistance. The fellow on the other end assured me it all would fit. Just to make sure, I asked if there had been any problems with the new EZRAM boards. I was assured that there had not been any problems.

When everything arrived, I had a friend install it for me. (He put in the original upgrade.) At first, it didn't work, but after some moving of chips and repositioning the board--2.5 megs of memory!! A short-lived happiness. Everything quit.

My computer was repaired (memory chips, video chip and other things). I have been told that a 520 ST should NEVER be upgraded past 1 meg. It draws too much power. But EZRAM *requires no power supply modifications*. Well, call Terrific and see if they can help. I wrote Terrific. No answer. I called. No answer. I called again. Left a message. Someone would call. No one did. Again, I called. This time a young lady answered and after hearing the problem, assured me a technician would call back. No one called. I left another message. I wrote them again. I wrote to magazines requesting help. (Thanks, CN and ST Informer for your help.) Apparently, ST Informer dropped Terrific from their magazine, but didn't say why. I don't know about Current Notes.

What I do know is this: Terrific assured me there were no problems with EZRAM II. That it didn't need extra power to work. That they were eager to sell me a board, but couldn't care less about it now that I've purchased it. I also know it cost me \$450 for a board and chips (including computer repairs) that *does not work*. The chips may be damaged, I don't know. I realize that sometimes add-ons will not work out of the box, but most companies will try to help. Not so with Terrific.

If you want an upgrade, stick to 1 meg. Any higher and you're asking for trouble. *Other* memory expansions may work fine, *but* EZRAM II doesn't and they are of no help. If you just *have* to have an EZRAM II, take the money to the toilet and flush it. It will save you more in the long run.

Donnie Proctor  
High Point, NC

## Stay Clear of Tech Specialities

Dear Editor,

I understand that computer magazines derive a great deal of their money from advertisements. However, when these advertisers deceive the readership by advertising products or services which they cannot provide, then it becomes necessary to inform the public of these unprofessional business practices. Such is the case with a company

which has advertised in a great many Atari specific magazines over the past several years: Tech-Specialities Co. of Houston, Texas.

Approximately six months ago, I sent my 520ST (purchased with a one megabyte RAM upgrade) to Tech-Specialities for a RAM upgrade to 4 megabytes. They advertise RAM upgrades as well as hard-drive components/kits. I had observed their advertisements in several magazines over the years and even read some favorable reviews on their upgrade kits. I first talked with their owner and technician Kay Vaumund and he assured me that an upgrade to 4 megabytes was no problem and would be completed quickly after receiving my computer. He required, however, advance payment. I consider myself a good judge of character, and having read favorable reviews of his company, I forwarded my computer and money.

After waiting approximately two weeks, I telephoned Mr. Vaumund to find out how the upgrade was progressing. He advised me that he had not even started the project. I did, however, receive my cancelled check, indicating that he had deposited my money in his account. Several weeks later, after not having received the computer, I once again telephoned Tech-Specialities, only to be advised that my one megabyte upgrade had been soldered into the computer and that this required de-soldering prior to the installation of the 4 megabyte upgrade. Vaumund told me that this would take longer and that he would complete it as he had time. I later learned, however, that he had already begun the de-soldering process without giving me a chance to contemplate other alternatives (due to the lengthy delays). After three months had elapsed, and I still didn't have my computer, I decided that enough was enough. I had made some one dozen long-distance telephone calls during this time (California to Texas) and received excuse after excuse for not completing the upgrade.

I gave him official notice that I wanted my money refunded and computer returned or I would file small claims action against him. He failed to acknowledge and I filed suit in Harris County, Texas. Last week I was notified by the court that I was awarded judgement. They awarded me full cash settlement (my original deposit, the value of my computer and court costs). Is there a happy ending? Not quite yet. I still have to collect. Although he has been given 10 days to pay, I don't expect settlement. He ignored me right from the beginning and I don't see any reason for him to change. I have, however, commenced lien proceedings against him and his company. It may take awhile, but I am optimistic.

As a valued subscriber to yours and other ST magazines, I understand the dependency on advertisers as a source of income. However, it is equally important that your readership be warned of businesses/companies who fail to deliver, regardless of the magazines they advertise in. Unfortunately, I took the rocky road. Let's hope that your readers learn from my bumpy ride. *Stay clear of Tech-Specialities Co.*

Cordially,  
G.D.Heckman  
La Quinta, CA



# Atari In 1999, Lynx, Portfolio, Atari Stock, the STE And.....?

## Blasting Into The '90's

The game of Monopoly in the Russian language is now on sale in Moscow. Noriega is now in a U.S. court calling as a defense witness his last CIA case officer, President Bush. Few other symbols more effectively vivify the wave of economic and social freedom that washed over the planet in the closing hours of the 80's and the beginning minutes of the 90's. While we normally get a crick in our neck when we read "instant histories" of the last decade or "immediate projections" of the next, for Atarians it is quite clear that the Atari 800 began it all in the early 80's. And almost as clear is it that some device possessing the computing power and speed of a mainframe, with highly intuitive software (maybe even some real artificial intelligence) with graphics better than High Definition Television and fully integrated into the other electric tools of your life, e.g. phone & TV, and finally as portable as the Lynx is, all of that will be the Atari device that will stand out at the end of the next decade. You will order groceries with it, telephone from your car with it, send all your mail with it, get your news and entertainment from it, and yes, even compute with it. Atari made? Yes, way back in the nether reaches of our CFV (crystal future viewer) we see Atari, still being unique and far less self-destructive with only pictures on its corporate wall to remind employees of the former management--the Tramiels.

## Birthing Pains

Judging from the cries of anguish on GENie, the pain of bringing *pc-ditto II* into the world may be considerable. Bill Teal of

Avant-Garde Systems has appeared on GENie to apologize. Teal started shipping *pc-ditto II* in quantity the second week in January. Then bang! the sky started falling. The relatively large 7.5" x 4" board wouldn't fit in the 520ST or the 1040's, unless they were Revision C. They had to be attached by shielded cable to the outside the case. Most Mega ST's needed a bus connector, supplied by Avant-Garde Systems, to attach to the 68000 chip. But the real blow was what

## ST UPDATE by Frank Sommers

appears to be a glitch in the board itself. As we go to press, of those shipped, we still cannot find one that is up and running. Teal has announced the problem will be corrected asap. Because of the reputation he has garnered for product quality to date let's give him the benefit of the doubt.

## The Up Side

What Inspires Confidence? We all know it. We all know that some people have that rare quality of projecting a genuine display of interest in you and what you are saying, or that equally unique quality -- you can have confidence in what they say, you can believe them. One of Atari's "most senior" top managers, Bob Brody, the person in charge of user group support, among other things, appears to have a lot of the latter and much of the former qualities. He states with jocular humility that he has "been around" longer than many of his predecessors, and also his bosses.

He demonstrates a serious commitment to user groups and their needs and problems, and where possible he tries to keep the record straight. As a one-man operation he obviously won't be at all the shows, but he does want to meet user groups, and he is up on GENie regularly and will answer your questions there as well as phone calls to him at Atari. Several people have notified us that his performance on GENie engenders something called "respect." Recently, Brody implied that we might be accused of hyping Atari's stock if we continued to propagate our "estimate" on Atari's total daily sales of the Portfolio. (In December we had decimated a rumor that Atari expected to sell 70,000 Portfolio's a day during the month; and noted at best it might be 7,000 a day.) Brody wanted the record to read a world-wide total by the end of December of 200,000 units shipped. We find this kind of straight forwardness with the facts quite reassuring.

Then you have rumors from within Atari that one of the most rational, humble, and big league "guys" in Atari management, somebody who will listen, if not lead, is Charles Crouch, one of the highest level officers in the company who is not a Tramiel. Two quality types is too much, you say, for a corporation that spends more time on its sword than Dracula spends in his coffin.

But how about three? The new head of the developers group, Charles Cherry, is dispatching a developers kit that provides serious developers with information on the base of registered Atari computer users, the Atari dealers, and the serious discounts available to developers wishing to purchase Atari equipment. One source stated that means a developer can buy an Atari laser printer for \$400 off the user price. It would seem he is making a credible effort to convince developers that they can expect support. A difficult job, you might say, because of Atari's history in this area? No worse than Gorbachev's. So, for the

hopeful, those of us who care about keeping Atari up and running in America, these are three you might wish to encourage.

### **The Down Side**

Even the space shuttle has to land sometime. But let's have it be "a light one." First, Atari seems to have forsaken the U.S. market, to a point where whispers are heard that they will abandon "this unforgiving market." We have talked to half a dozen serious, articulate, Atari dedicated individuals, who have concluded Sam Tramiel won't listen. He is intelligent, he can be warm and pleasant, but in the final analysis he won't listen. As the landing glide shortens, we should note that in less than five years, Atari's reputation for doing business like Bush does Panama has made it difficult for them to get credit, anywhere. The Federated battery drain continues. G. Tramiel, youngest and most responsive to new stimuli of the clan, hoped to present the family with "a done deal" as a Christmas present. He came close, but "heavy details", like taking over 20-year leases which Atari had signed for when they made the original purchase, had to be negotiated. And finally, if ever there was a Darth Vader out there in electronic land waiting to kill off the new and the innovative then it has to be Atari's enemy of enemies, the FCC. If there is a voodoo doll in Leonard Tramiel's safe, stuffed with witch doctor pins, then it must look like the FCC. Without their approval the Stacey won't be with us "home users" until at least June. Dealers who aren't music stores or selling exclusively to businesses won't be able to carry it until then. Reason: Class A FCC approval means business use only (not in homes where it can muck up the community electronic happiness.) And the same with the STE, already selling in Canada, as we've noted, but which won't be available to non-business users until June.

### **Atari Passes Apple**

This may be the beginning of the year that Atari passes Apple in the numbers of "units" sold. Last year Atari was ranked 5th in that category. The dollar comparison was something else. (Atari's sales reportedly were \$500,000,000 versus Apple's \$2,000,000,000.) But if the sale of the Portfolio continues unabated, then the units-sold prize should go to Atari versus Apple, though the latter will still greet the former with a smile at the bank.

### **The System Is There**

It's been available for a couple of years, the Touch Screen System. Not many of us have been aware of it. Apparently it sells, at \$15,000 a copy, rather well. What is it? The standard configuration is 2 Mega ST computers, 3 monitors (2 mono and 1 color), a big hard drive and some fancy point-of-sales software. It provides the restaurant, or the beauty salon, or what have you, with a complete accounting, payroll, inventory, etc. system. One VAR which has sold a couple of dozen says that the trick is never to mention the word Atari until after the sale is complete. The computer and monitor part of the system have labels pasted over the Atari logo's.

### **The Lynx Affair**

Nintendo hit the Xmas field with 1.1 million Game Boys. Industry analyst said they "hurt themselves" by not being able to meet the more than 3 million demand for the hand held computer game machine. Atari roared out of their "locker" onto the holiday selling arena with circa .07 million Lynx color monitor hand held game machines. Those who had compared both machines, i.e. had them in hand and played a game or two on both, maintained that the Lynx was the hands down winner, "...most outstanding graphics you've seen; as good as an arcade machine; resolution less than an arcade machine, but in reduced size looks just as sharp; extraordinarily impressive machine, instantly there,

no booting up or fooling around; Atari should sell several million of them...."

That was before Xmas. What was the Christmas track record. Toys-R-Us hoped to have them in early December. B.N. Genius, a Washington-state Xmas catalogue and high-tech devices distributor, hoped to have them before 1 December, as noted in the last issue. Sears had highlighted them in their Xmas ads. And of all of these sources where could you actually buy one? Atari at the end of November acknowledged to callers that they would "be available in N.Y. City, at F.A.O. Schwartz," premier toy company of America. Calls to that store produced the info that they had received two shipments in two days and they were all gone immediately; the impression was that they had gotten less than three dozen machines. Sears told callers that they were "back ordered" and hopefully would be available by 21 December. B.N. Genius said their shipment was due in on 24 November, "something unusual must have happened to the truck." They were back ordered, had ordered 155 and already had orders for 146.

Then there was the Epyx "story." Did Atari actually destroy its chances of penetrating the Nintendo Xmas game market, built by mega \$\$'s of Nintendo Saturday morning advertising over the past four years until the name of the game was "Nintendo" and no kid worth his salt would ask for anything else? Did Atari, famous for its "sharp business practices," take a whack at Epyx for late deliveries that brought the company to its knees and in the process cut off Atari's supply of Lynx machines? The Lynx developers had been waiting for three months for their Lynx, developer's documentation and Amiga 2000 machines from Atari's developer's center at Lombard, Illinois. Amiga's? Yes, all the development of software for the Lynx was being done on the Amiga!



And why would Amiga developers want to get behind the Lynx? High selling potential, and as R.J. Mical and David Needle, the inventors of the Lynx noted, "The Lynx is 20,000 times more powerful than the Amiga sprite engine. The Lynx has unlimited sprite capacity." What does that mean? Simply put, it tells us that you can have an unlimited number of objects moving around the Lynx screen at one time. Mical and Needle's review in *Electronics Game Monthly*, published in Lombard, IL suggests that they watched the Atari development of the Lynx closely.

So, who actually got one for Xmas and where were they able to get it? Well, New York got the lion's share. Atari estimated it was better to "adequately" supply one market than trickle down in several. Sears did ship a few just before Xmas. And B.N. Genius sold all of theirs (see Lynx-Game Boy comparison elsewhere in this issue.) So that was 70,000. Nobody will know how many more they could have sold. Manufacturing has been moved from Japan to Taiwan. There, indeed, had been a problem with the company manufacturing the screens for the Lynx and Atari. It will be interesting to see how long it takes to resupply the market place.

### Marsupials

The pouch is the thing. That's where you carry your most prized possession, or at least marsupials do. Sensing this, Caseworks(4038-B 128th Ave. S.E., Suite 294, Bellevue, WA 98006; 800-829-0041) has produced the PCpouch, a small water-resistant nylon zippered case that carries your Portfolio, 3 RAM cards and 3 AA battery spares in a space not much bigger than the Portfolio itself, \$24.95. If you're into leather, add \$25 more.

### The STE

Dealer gossip has been that the ST with enhanced sound and graphics will not be sold in the U.S. until the 520's and 1040's have been

sold off. While pressure on the dealers to take shipments of 1040's might add fuel to this theory, the more likely culprit is the FCC. Atari maintains that you will see the STE on dealer shelves in the U.S. as soon as Atari has FCC approval. To buttress their statement, they point out that where FCC approval is not required, the STE is already selling and selling well, i.e. Canada. Word has it that Atari, U.S. built a shield for the STE, tested it themselves, found it met the specs, and then submitted it to our gracious U.S.G. Inexplicably it failed. But corrections have been made and you could be seeing the louder, gaudier STE soon, indeed, here in the U.S.

Canadian sales, at least in Toronto, have been higher than dealers expected. It has been selling at an average of \$1,200 Canadian (\$1 U.S. = \$1.15 CAN), that includes a color monitor and a 1040 STE, and reportedly has appeared as low as \$700 discount.

The down side of its "coming out party" has been the usual poor man's approach to marketing it. The documentation for this the new Flag Ship of the line, is simply a 1040 ST manual with an addendum sheet; a sure fire way of convincing prospective buyers that there isn't much new here.

It comes with the new TOS 1.6 (which may make the heads spin of those of us who don't have TOS 1.4 in our systems yet). There are the usual reports of incompatibilities. *Current Notes* author, Greg Csullog has discovered that the following programs are incompatible, i.e. just won't run: *Neodesk 2.05*, *Drafix*, *WordPerfect* ('87 vintage), *Spelling Bee*, and *Bentley Bear*. Also he notes that *Pinhead*, *UIS II*, and *Headstart* will not run from an auto folder. It has no internal clock! It does have the blitter.

### TV & the Teacher

New Yorkers have always considered themselves more advanced than denizens of other cities. And if you're talking about seeing Atari ads

on TV, it's true once again. There the little guy is, raising his hand to get "permission" from the teacher. And there's a second one, and then a third. In the restroom you see the first boy hide himself in a stall as he brings out his Lynx game machine. Then you see a teacher coming down the hall. He hears a noise, opens the restroom door, and there are the three little guys, all hooked up, stall by stall, by cable playing their Lynx.

### Wall St. Rose Garden

Unless you're a "market regular" you probably don't know what a "turn around pick" is. That's an "opportunity stock." And, apparently, Atari is looked at by at least one stockmarket analyst as a stock that is turning itself around and should be seriously considered. The analyst, in this instance, is the well-known Lee Isgur, who follows Atari stock closely from New York City and who also several years ago wrote a stock portfolio program for the ST, which sits on the shelf at our right. Isgur sees Atari as coming out of the '88 doldrums when its earnings were a minus \$1.45 a share; essentially because of the \$100 million write off of the Federated disaster. In 1989 he expects the numbers to equal a +\$.25-.45 a share, growing rapidly in 1990 to \$1.50-2.50 and doubling to \$2-\$3 in 1991. He sees the Portfolio and Lynx as two of the main reasons for this reach to the stars.

We are loath to go toe to toe with someone of Lee Isgur's stock analysis renown. We should report, however, that *Business Journal* in it's 8 Jan. issue quotes a \$.09 loss per share for 3rd quar. '89 versus a \$.02 per share profit for the same period in '88. They also had Atari reporting a \$.03 a share loss per share for all three quarters ending September 30, 1989 versus a \$.21 per share profit for the same nine months in 1988 (before the write off for Federated in the last quarter.) So, as they say, you looks at the numbers and you takes your pick.

January, 1990



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**New Print Shop Drivers.** Innovative Concepts recently released three printer drivers for use with Broderbund's *Print Shop*. They are PS Atari 1020 Driver, PS Okimate 10 Driver, and PS Epson LQ-500/800 Driver. The first supports any one of four colors and does not modify the original disks. The Okimate 10 version is similar but only prints in black. The third is made for the new 24-pin printers and also only prints in black. Each retails for \$14.95.

The author of the drivers is Jim Steinbrecher of Sector One Computers. Jim, the original author of the terminal program *Amodem*, is also responsible for another of I.C.'s products—*Easy Scan* (the Graphics Image Scanner for the Atari 8-bits).

*[Innovative Concepts, 311172 Shawn Drive, Warren, MI 48093, (313) 293-0730.]*

**Sharing Dreams.** In an October, 1989 letter to CN, reader *David Lefly* made some thoughtful observations and suggestions that Atari Corp. might well consider.

"I would certainly love to see some of the new hand-held game machine's technology passed on to us, in particular, a new OS that would support a fast 65C02 microprocessor as well as memory upgrades past 320K that don't disable one of the machine's more attractive features, internal BASIC. Realistically speaking, this isn't going to happen. No resources for it. One could also wish for a more enlightened (less predatory) Atari attitude toward third party developers. For example, BASIC XE burnt into ROM and a licensed disk version of SpartaDOS are "naturals." The question is, could ICD survive the relationship? No doubt this thought is running through Alan Reeve's mind as he puts the finishing touches on his Diamond application programs...."

Mr. Lefly's continues: "Replace the 65XE/130XE/XEGS hodgepodge with a \$100, 128K XEGS! Sell it with a coupon for an "XEGS Productivity Package" of DOS XE, and XF551 drive, a dual-mode (joystick/ST) mouse, the *Diamond Cart/Diamond Write, Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*, and a decent printer, price-competitive with the low-end dedicated home word processors. Has anyone else noticed a game machine backlash? I've seen more and more friends sell their Nintendos or lock them up at work because Little Johnny was skipping studies and playing, getting up at 3 a.m. for a quickie and displaying other symptoms of addiction. A pure game machine is an expensive toy with a real potential for abuse. Besides, the XEGS is dated game technology, and it will never go head-to-head with Nintendo's marketing—so why not capitalize on its real strength of being more than a toy?"

Later David describes his "realistic" 8-bit dream machine. "...320K, two cart slots and a parallel bus port,

built-in XF551 and XEP80, and a detachable keyboard—a decent one at last (no XE junk please!) with a proper cable, F1-F4 keys and a numeric keypad. Don't forget the 'dual-mode' mouse and *Diamond*. Build the console case so the add-on fan Kensington makes for the Apple II will fit. Not an impossible redesign, but a rationalized machine to create a user-base of the DSDD drive, 80-column card and XE expanded memory that would support software development."

Our thanks to Dave for his insightful comments and for sharing his dreams with us.

**Is SpartaDOS for Me?** *Tim Fullerton*, recently submitted a brief article concerning SpartaDOS. I have taken the liberty of including it in its entirety. It is entitled "Is SPARTADOS For Me? (What the other reviewers have missed)."

After reading the comparison in the November issue of *Current Notes* between SpartaDOS and Atari DOS-XE, I felt that I had to put in my two cents' worth. Please don't get me wrong, Terry Cowen did a good job of bringing out the best points of both operating systems, but there are two or three things that were glossed over that I find important.

No, you don't need to spend \$150 to enjoy the benefits of SpartaDOS. I only spent \$40 for the Construction Set. Granted, the SpartaDOS-X on cartridge is nice, but since DOS 2.5 was on disk, I did not begrudge my new DOS also being on disk.

Okay, repeat after me, "I hate command line operating systems. Why should I have to memorize eleventy-zillion commands?" A menu-driven DOS is so much easier. All of your options are right on the screen in front of you. Surprise, ICD heard us! The MENU utility of SpartaDOS is a joy to use. The only command-line commands that I have had to memorize are "DOS," "RD D3:" (to set up a RAMdisk) and "MENU."

Copying programs is a breeze. You don't even have to use wildcards. A disk directory appears on the screen. Use the arrow keys and space bar to highlight the files that you want copied. Tell the computer where you want them to go and copy them. Since I had the RAMBO 256K upgrade installed, I typically copy to the RAMdisk and then to my destination disk. It sounds more cumbersome than it actually is.

A lot of DOS 2.5 users feel intimidated by all of the references to Directories and Subdirectories. What's that all about? It's like making one disk pretend that it's two or three disks. For instance, I put driving games and maze games on one disk but under different directory headings just to keep them separate. Why bother? Think for a minute, how is a hard disk partitioned? Yep, make it pretend that it's a whole bunch of floppy drives. Also, as hard disk drives get bigger and faster it won't be long

before the older ones come up for sale at bargain prices by their owners who wish to upgrade. By owning SpartaDOS now, you'll be ready when you make the big leap to a hard drive.

I'll admit that I'm a fan of ICD. In addition to owning RAMBO XL, I installed US Doublers in my 1050 drives. ICD's commitment to quality products, documentation and technical support is a boon to us who don't yet want to part with our beloved Atari 8-bits."

**Winter Challenge Deal.** *Larry Estep*, who occasionally contributes to this column, has been in touch with the people at Software Discounters of America (SDA) concerning the availability of 8-bit products. Recently, SDA halted sales of Atari software; however, the company has a supply of titles remaining in its warehouse. One of these is *Winter Challenge*, a five-event Winter Olympics game from Thunder Mountain. The game was never widely released, but from all accounts it is a gem.

Larry has asked me to tell you that he will order copies of *WC* from his SDA contact. The price for the program, including postage, will be \$12.50. If you would like to order a copy, send Larry a check or money order. His address is 524 Roseview Terrace, New Albany, Indiana 47150.

**Martian Light Phaser (MALP).** (These light gun items are by **John Pilge**, a contributor from California. John has written a tic-tac-toe game employing the light gun. He wonders if his is the first public domain title for the gun. -LP)

The Martian Light Phaser by Mars Merchandising is a Sega Light Phaser. There is more difference than just re-spelling phaser. The Light Phaser has been rewired to work on the Atari and has been relabeled.

Mars Merchandising could have rewired the Nintendo light gun. I'm glad they chose the Sega Light Phaser. The trigger has less travel than the Nintendo model and allows better accuracy. Besides, the plug on the Sega matches the Atari game ports.

The MALP is compatible with the Atari light gun. Whatever game works with the Atari light gun will work with the MALP. Both Atari and MALP have excellent feel in firing. The trigger has little travel; the firing is done at the end of the travel so there is less error in shooting.

A program comes with the MALP so you can test it. It isn't much of a game. It just shows your choice of targets and marks where your shots are aimed. But Mars Merchandising does sell games for the MALP that also work with the Atari light gun.

*[Mars Merchandising, 1041B E. St. Charles Road, Lombard, IL 60148 (312) 530-0988.]*

**High Scores with the Light Gun.** Games like *Barnyard Blaster*, *Crossbow* and *Crime Buster* need a light gun. Although a light gun is just a light pen with an

extra lens, you need to use the same techniques as a pistol. These shooting tips should help your score on light gun games.

Center the back of the light gun stock in the palm of your hand. Wrap the lower three fingers around the stock as far as you can reach. Since there is no recoil from shooting a light gun, you can relax your hand. The most pressure on the gun is from your middle finger, with no pressure from the little finger. Any pressure from the little finger can ruin your aim. Do not tighten or loosen the grip while shooting. Keeping the pressure of the grip constant will keep the light gun steady. You do not need much pressure on a light gun. Keep your hand relaxed, and you will be able to outlast the game.

For a steady grip, it would be best to rest your shooting arm on a desk or chair. You can use your other arm to steady your shooting arm in this position.

Line up the sights of the light gun. Look and focus on the sights. The target should look fuzzy. If the target is clear and the sights are fuzzy, you are looking at the target instead of the sights. When moving the aim to a new target, don't just move your wrist. Move your arm, so you can aim better.

Finger position on the trigger is where it is comfortable. Every time you change your grip, your accuracy will change. Shooters who use the second joint of the finger have a tendency to pull to the right, while shooters who use the extreme tip of the finger tend to press left. When shooting, trigger finger pressure is directly to the rear. The best way to do this is to think of a spot directly behind the light gun stock and press toward it. Any pressure other than straight to the rear moves the light gun off target. After you have the basics, it is just a matter of practice.

The light gun works similar to the light pen. Memory locations 564 or 54284 (565 or 54285) are both the horizontal (vertical) position of the light pen. PEEKing both 564 and 565 will show the LAST screen position of the light gun even when you move it off the screen. The position of the light pen does not correspond to graphic pixels of any graphic screen. There are 96 vertical positions numbered from 16 at the top to 111 at the bottom. According to "Mapping The Atari," the horizontal positions start at 67 on the left, are reset to zero at 255 and continue to 7 at the far right of the screen. This didn't work on my TV set. Mine starts at 89 on the left, resets to 0 after 227, and continues to 24 on the far right.

The light gun does not replace a joystick nor can you use a mouse or paddles to work as a light gun. The light gun's trigger does not work like a joystick fire button. For the light gun, the command STICK(0) reads the trigger (zero for port one or one for port two). If the trigger is squeezed, STICK(0) reads 15. STICK(0) reads 14 otherwise. If this were a joystick, 14 would mean the joystick is pressed forward, and 15 would mean the joystick is centered (at rest).



# Introducing PostScript

## More on Shielding a Mega

Last month I outlined a procedure that essentially shielded the disk drive cable inside a Mega. The reason we did this was to make the GCR more reliable in reading Mac formatted disks. In the procedure, I stated that the disk drive itself did not require additional shielding because it already contained a shield (which it does). I have since discovered that adding additional shielding to the drive mechanism itself can improve GCR operation even more.

## Another Procedure

Open the Mega again. Remove the disk drive and cut a piece of aluminum foil large enough to wrap the entire drive. After wrapping the drive, cut away ONLY the sections of aluminum foil that need to be exposed for remounting (such as tapped holes, cable connectors, etc). Now wrap the drive with some bare wire and connect the bare wire to some ground point in your system. Your drive is now shielded! Remount the drive and connect the drive cables and now you're in business.

## On to PostScript

In this and the next couple of months I will be discussing the PostScript page description language. This information is quite important for Spectre users who wish to use an Apple LaserWriter or

Atari Laser for their publishing needs. With the recent introduction of UltraScript for the HP Deskjet, I have personally become interested in PostScript. The quality of output produced with this combination will shock you. It has been a very convenient combination for learning PostScript programming and producing exceptional drafts before they are sent to the laser printer.

Most of my information has been obtained by word of mouth with friends in the "publishing business" (in other words, anybody who owns a desktop publishing program!). Don't let that scare you, I did do my homework and read the book titled *Understanding PostScript Programming* by David A. Holzgang. Two other books I find useful are the *PostScript Language Reference Manual* and *PostScript Language Tutorial and Cookbook*, both by Adobe Systems.

I have also found that people are scared of transverting files from the Mac to the ST for printing. I will admit it, I was, too! But once an understanding of "what you are doing" is gained, the whole process is much easier.

## Of Printing and Printers

Everyone knows that to produce good looking output (i.e. pages of print), we need a good high quality printer along with a good print driver. The "standard" printer is a 9-pin dot matrix and Epson compatible. I call this the "standard" because of the sheer number of them sold. Just about everyone has owned one or two.

The print quality of the 9-pin was great when we bought it, but

now it just seems to lack something (at least mine does)? When we wanted to improve the quality, most of us were told that what we really needed was a letter quality printer. This new printer probably sported a 24-pin dot matrix print head. We were told that the more pins the print head contained the better. After we purchased this new printer we soon discovered we also needed a new printer driver to "control" this printer. If we didn't get the right driver for the right program, our output might not look any better than the "old" 9-pin or, worse yet, it may not work at all!

## What Does 9-pin Mean?

There are several ways to get output these days. Printers come in all shapes and sizes. One of the most common ways of printing text and/or graphics is to "press" ink from a ribbon onto the surface of the paper. This is what a dot matrix printer does. In fact a dot matrix printer is little different than an ordinary typewriter! A typewriter simply strikes a character (letter) onto the page by pressing the shape of the character on the printer ribbon. A dot matrix printer simply presses a very thin wire onto the ribbon (somewhat like striking the period character except the wire is much smaller in diameter).

If we take several wires (let's say oh...9) and place them side by side vertically we could form a character by controlling the striking of all those wires while moving the print head horizontally. Yes, all of that happens while you're printing. That's why dot matrix printers make such awful noises when printing.



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You will often see the term 9-wire instead of 9-pin; they both mean the same thing.

You might think that in order for an ST program to "control" a printer, a huge number of calculations must take place in order to control all those wires. You think correctly (well almost). If we *only* print text, all of the work to control those wires is being performed inside the printer. That's because most printers contain enough brains to print text. In fact, most printers contain enough built-in information to print text in several different flavors, such as **bold**, *italic*, underlined, <sup>superscript</sup>, <sub>subscript</sub> and so on... The only thing the program *must* do is tell the printer when to "turn on and off" the various modes of operation. For example, if we want to turn on bold printing, we would send the printer the numbers 27 and 71 if the printer was Epson compatible. To turn off bold print, we would need to send it the numbers 27 and 72.

### Epson Compatible?

It couldn't have been longer than five years ago that almost every printer made contained its own special way of turning on and off the various modes (bold, italic,...). This became a nightmare for programmers and users alike. Most programs required you to run a special "printer installation" program at least once to set up your printer. The procedure required you to look up special codes contained in the back of your printer manual and enter them into the computer! (It wasn't all that long ago). Nowadays, if the printer is designated as Epson compatible, then it means it follows a standard format for telling the printer how to go into the various modes. If you're looking into purchasing a dot-matrix printer, make certain it is Epson compatible!

Now if we want to print graphics, guess what? Yes, we (i.e. the programmer) must control the

movement of each and every one of those 9 wires! *Now* we start getting into some tricky calculations. If we decide to buy a 24-pin printer, then the program must make a different set of calculations. This is why a different printer driver is required. The printer driver contains the information the program needs to make the correct calculations. If you don't have the right driver for your printer, all sorts of strange results can occur.

To sum up, if you're going to print *only* text, a 24-pin printer will look much better and here's why.

### Of Resolution

The height of standard printed text is 1/8 inch (0.125 inch). That's the length of the 9-pins that are placed side by side vertically. If we divide the text height (0.125 inches) by number of pins used to print it (9 pins), we find out the diameter of the wires. The number is  $0.125/9$  which equals 0.01389 inches. That's pretty small! In fact, if we invert this number (i.e.  $1/0.01389$ ) we find out that we could fit 72 pins side by side in one inch! This is the printers resolution!

The higher the printers resolution, the higher the print quality. This is because the manufacturer has a "finer grid" to construct characters used for printing.

We just discovered that our 9-pin printer has a resolution of 72 dots per inch. What is the resolution of a 24-pin printer? Performing the same calculations we find it to be 192 dots per inch! You will often see numbers such as these floating around in computer printer manuals. In fact most printers are able to obtain higher resolutions depending on the various tricks the manufacturer plays when designing the printer. Also, don't be totally convinced that an inexpensive 24-pin printer will always look better than a 9-pin! Take a look at the print quality before you buy.

### Other Printers

There are several methods to get a printed page. It so happens that a dot matrix printer is only one type in a now huge fishbowl. The first alternative that comes to mind is the ink jet printers now available. An ink jet produces output by dripping tiny drops of ink onto the page. The ink, as you might think, is wet for a short time after printing. Print resolutions up to 300 dots per inch can be achieved!

Laser printers are now starting to get popular with the continuing price reductions. Most laser printers can achieve resolutions up to 300 dots per inch also. (Even though the resolution is the same as the ink jet the print quality is clearer, the dots are better formed). Resolutions up to 2,000-2,400 dots per inch can be achieved on professional typesetting machines.

### The Resolution Problem

Well, you can see the resolution of printers can vary all over the map, from 72 dots per inch to 2,000 and more. Now it should be apparent how much work is involved in printing anything to do with graphics. Wouldn't it be nice if there was an easier way? Wouldn't it be much easier if we could simply forget the printers resolution and just tell the printer what to draw? Such as a line, a circle, a square?

The problem of entering all the numbers into some printer installation program was solved by settling on a standard way of sending text to the printer. The printer took care of actually printing the text at the highest resolution it could! What about a standard for graphics?

### Introducing PostScript

PostScript is the standard for describing graphics, much like Epson is the standard on how to print text. When we wanted an "Epson compatible" printer to print **bold** text, we sent it the numbers 27 and 71. When we want a PostScript

printer to print a circle, we send it the "arc" command. If we want a PostScript printer to draw a line, we send it the "lineto" command. Starting to make sense?

At this point you're probably thinking, "PostScript is just a set of commands to print graphics." Right? Wrong! PostScript is a full blown computer language! In fact it is an interpreted language much like BASIC. When you print a page using a PostScript printer, you are actually sending a computer program to the printer! The program is written in a language called, what else, PostScript. After the program is transferred to the printer, the program runs, and (hopefully) a page is produced!

Next month we will continue on with our discussion of PostScript. We will be covering, among other topics, how the Atari handles PostScript, how the Mac handles it, and how to mix the two and produce some surprisingly good results!

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## New Spectre CN Library Disks

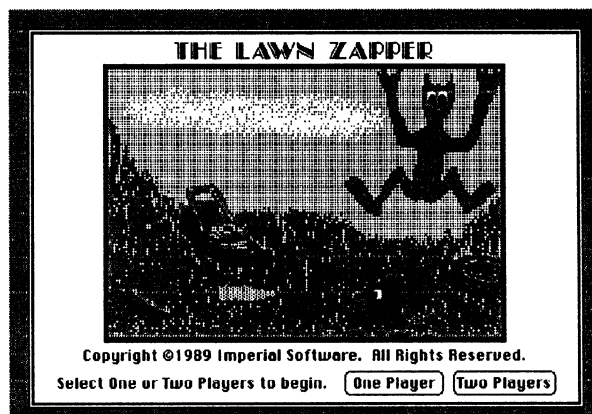
by Jeff Greenblatt

This month, *Current Notes* is releasing five new public domain and Shareware Spectre compatible (128K ROMs) library disks. For those of you using the Spectre with 64K ROMs, I recommend the excellent CN Magic library listed elsewhere. If you like and use any of the files, don't forget to make your shareware donation(s) to the author(s). Here is a rundown of what each of the new disks contain:

**S47D, S48D: Phoenix**, an interactive adventure game based on the movies 2001 and 2010, requires both disks. Your job is to map previously explored galaxies, but you accidentally find the starship, Discovery. It never was destroyed. You must somehow get

Discovery back to earth using HAL. HAL responds to your commands with digitized voice sounds from both movies. (Requires version 1.9 or higher of Spectre, and two double-sided drives or a Hard Disk.)

**S49: Lawn Zapper**, an arcade type game. The object of the game



is to mow a lawn while avoiding hazards. This game has digitized sound and is quite addictive. (Requires version 1.9 or higher of Spectre).

**S50: Dungeons of Doom, Version 5.4.** This is an interactive adventure game based on Dungeons and Dragons. If you enjoyed the 4.0 version of this game, you'll enjoy this, the most recent version, even more.

**S51D: Postscript Fonts #1**, contains 11 Postscript Type 3 fonts for a postscript printer or, using Transverter, moved over to the ST side and printed out using Ultrascript. There is a file on the disk called Using Ultrascript with instructions on how to create Postscript files and print them out. The fonts on this disks are: Archimedes Border, Bill's Dingbats, Classic Heavy, Classic Italic, Classic Roman, Draftsman, Faust, Gordon, Style, Tiny Helvetica, and Toulouse Lautrec.

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Classic Italic 18 Point

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Classic Roman 18 Point



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ToulouseLautree 18 Point

Sample of PostScript  
fonts available on  
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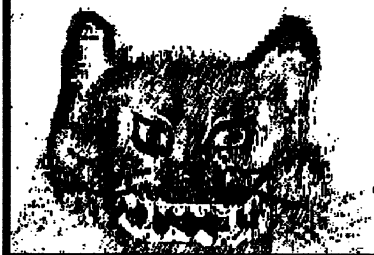
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# The Junkyard Pussycat



by  
John  
Barnes

## The Computer as Toaster?

In Charles Cherry's newsletter to developers he introduces the "purchaser of the computer-appliance." This is said to be a buyer who expects to do only one thing with his computer. This purchaser is described as someone who does not read magazines, does not join user groups, does not go online, and does not look for other applications.

The millions of MS-DOS machines in American homes, the millions of application packages that have been brought home from the office, the thousands of tons of magazine paper devoted to PC magazines, and the yards of PC related books on the shelf at any book store all bear eloquent witness to the fact that home computer buyers are knowledgeable and anxious to learn more.

The resistance to products that are not MS-DOS compatible is a sign that ordinary users have learned to tame a user-hostile operating system and make it do their work for them.

The idea of the computer-appliance when seen in this light appears to be a piece of wishful thinking conjured up at Atari Corporation. By stripping out as much added value as possible to keep the price down the Tramiels and their minions thought that they could get their computers into every household by marketing the machines like toasters, electric shavers, or stereos. By avoiding a heavy commitment to developer and user support Atari figured to save themselves lots of financial and personnel problems.

It is time for Atari to admit that this approach has been a failure. Other vendors have been far more successful at getting their products into homes and offices.

The installed base of Atari machines is too small to make the market attractive to developers who have been feasting on megabuck sales in the MS-DOS world. ST software developers who have introduced promising products have found the pickings so slim that they do not support continued upgrades or even bug

fixes. Timeworks, Word Perfect, and Generic Software are cases in point.

Atari claims to be targeting the "personal" computing market but it is doing so with hardware that goes far beyond this market. Atari has always had problems with this lack of engineering focus. The ST may have been too sophisticated a machine for the market targeted by the Tramiels. The SLM804 laser printer is a very clever engineering stroke, but the lack of good printer drivers to handle simple tasks has been crippling. At a cost of \$4000 or so for hardware and another \$500 or more for software this system is only for the most avid home user. The CD-ROM has been sitting in the warehouse for a long time now because no one has done the software development to make it useful. The ATW and the TT are obviously not machines aimed at the home market.

The software side of the issue tells a similar tale. Atari struck out on an untrodden path while the other developers entered the home computer market with software that was a logical outgrowth of a familiar, if deficient, system.

Atari entered this fray without committing the resources needed to make it all the way through.

These were basic business decisions, perhaps even bold ones, but they will succeed only if Atari can get help from friendly natives along the way. It will have to create a climate that encourages people to write software for the ST and its yet-to-be-born brethren.

The new initiatives for developers described elsewhere in this issue might prove helpful if they can be backed with enough money and talent. Unfortunately, these initiatives appear to be mainly oriented toward marketing and do not yet address the issue of technical support. It is not clear how they will lead to the writing of new software.

Developers with whom I have spoken have expressed a lot of frustration over the quality and quantity of assistance they have received from Atari. The most successful ones seem to have done it largely on their own. They may not need the kind of help that Atari proposes to provide.

Sophisticated users are another class of friends who could be most helpful. There are too many cases where Atari personnel have said "that kind of information is only available to registered developers." The number of good public domain programs available bears eloquent witness to the programming ability of these sophisticated users. When you are coming from behind, as Atari clearly is, perhaps you take your friends where you find them.

To summarize, if Atari Corporation wishes to remain in business as a manufacturer of computers, it should act like a computer company rather than a consumer electronics company or a toy company. It should provide high quality hardware adapted to real computing tasks and it should stimulate the development of

high quality software across the complete range from development tools to business applications. The features of its systems should be well-documented and this documentation should be widely available.

Perhaps, on the other hand, Mr Cherry's reference to "computer-appliances" should be interpreted as a sign that Atari is being seduced by a perceived success of the Portfolio, which may, indeed, be a true computer-appliance, and which seems to have outsold (in numbers) the ST's in the United States. The Lynx may yet prove to be another success story. If Atari can overcome some of its problems, it may be able to make lots of money as a computer-appliance manufacturer.

In this context, the 680XX based product lines are surely nothing more than a distraction. What will become of the STacy, the STE, and the TT's? Only time will tell, but time is running out fast.

It would not be fair to make such an issue of a single phrase unless that phrase were particularly apt as a capsule summation of Atari's approach as we have seen it stated and restated over the years. Thank you, Mr Cherry, for the "computer-appliance."

## **The Spectre of Christmas Present**

After nearly a year of being beguiled by a Mac IIX in his office, the Junkyard Pussycat let it be known that a Spectre GCR with a set of Apple 128k ROMs would make a nice Christmas present. The earlier Magic Sac and the Spectre 128 were not attractive because they were too "klugy." Mrs. Pussycat got hold of a Spectre GCR kit at L&Y Electronics and the Pussycat himself has been spending the last couple of weeks learning how to cozy up to it.

The following perceptions are presented in the hope of giving Current Notes readers a view that might be different from that provided by some of the other Magic/Spectre material in *Current Notes*.

Dave Small's place in history is assured for the work that he has done in giving a poor, starving Atari community a gateway into the opulence of the Macintosh world.

Bringing the system up is not altogether a trivial matter because the ST's hardware is not totally compatible with that of the Macintosh. Dave Small and friends have been plagued by the fact that certain disk drives on Atari machines (e.g., the GTS 100) are simply not compatible with the signals needed to read and write Mac disks, the built in disk drives on Megs pick up spurious signals unless they are modified, the Atari monochrome monitor gives off interference, and the signal level on the disk drive bus must be adjusted to an optimal value. There is a good bit of pain to go with the pleasure. This stuff is not in the manual and has to be picked up from local gurus or visits to the Gadgets by Small Roundtable on GENie.

The Pussycat's configuration is perhaps a Cadillac version because it uses a Syquest 44 removable car-

tridge as the drive for all of the Mac part of my software. It also runs on 4 megs of memory with a monochrome monitor. The removable hard drive pack is formatted for a small GEM partition to hold the Spectre software for the Atari side, a small MFS partition for converting files from Mac Format to Atari format, and a large Mac HFS partition. Since all of this is admittedly gibberish to the non-Macophile, it suffices to say that this configuration does not use up any hard drive space when the Spectre is not in use. Because the hard disk cartridge with the Spectre stuff can simply be swapped out for something else.

Disk space is a critical issue because Mac applications tend to be disk-intensive. Friends who own Macs without hard drives seem to be swapping disks all of the time and there are a number of applications that simply must run from a hard disk.

Memory is also an issue, and 520 users might not find the environment very satisfying because they will have somewhat less memory available than does a Mac 512. Some of the Pussycat's Mac Plus acquaintances find that 2 megs of memory is barely enough for heavy graphics work. Mega 2 and Mega 4 users should find satisfaction.

Dave Small points out that the tricks that are done to make Spectre run on a color monitor are really not satisfactory and he advises using a monochrome monitor. There is no support at all for color Mac applications.

The Macintosh trick of making the ejection of floppy disks from the drive a hardware function is designed to help the user avoid shooting himself in the foot. Since the ST does not have this function the GBS crew provides a workaround via the F-keys that seems to work reasonably well.

The GBS gang did some of their best work for those who have SLM804 laser printers. The built-in Imagewriter emulation is very nice and quick for doing screen dumps and simple printouts. The trick of snatching Postscript output into a text file and printing it using Ultrascript in the Atari mode produces very nice output.

The main obvious flaw in the Spectre GCR is the documentation. All of Dave Small's usually pleasing fey qualities are exhibited to the full in the Spectre GCR handbook. Perhaps this is just the mindset one needs to make a sow's ear into a Macintosh. However, one shouldn't need to wade through it when trying to get a piece of computer apparatus to work. Maybe computer manuals are dull, but there is no reason to read them as novels. Just the Facts, Ma'am, and they'd better be easy to find the next time one needs them.

If one overlooks these distractions there is a lot of useful information in there and the index is generally effective.

The real reason for installing a Spectre GCR is not to pay Dave and Sandy's mortgage, but to gain entry to the world of Mac software. The Spectre GCR opens up that portion of it that runs on a Mac512 or a Mac Plus.

There is a great deal of very satisfying material out there in spite of the fact that there are really not all that many more Macs on the loose than there are Atari ST's. The ones that are out there, however, appear to be in the hands of people who are willing to spend some money for software.

Mac software is expensive, but most of it is better written and better maintained than the equivalent software for the ST. There are graphics and data acquisition applications that we are unlikely to ever see on the ST. The coherence of the clipboard concept as it applies to moving data from one application to another is a true marvel. When a Mac owner buys his machine, he is also spending quite a few bucks that permit Apple to provide support to developers and educational discounts to get the machines onto university campuses.

The Pussycat really hasn't had a chance to make choices on "must-have" software for the Mac, but *Microsoft Word*, *Mathtype*, and a presentation graphics program like *Cricket Graph* or *Igor* are likely to be early choices. A good program editor along the lines of *QUED* is also a must. A nice CAD package would be good, but one would have to be absolutely certain that a product like *Claris CAD* really does offer the functionality that people want but can't get on the ST. The bill for all of this can add up in a hurry.

Programming for the Mac is perhaps even more complicated than for the ST but Apple is said to have been generous in its support for some development projects and many of the big software houses offer both Mac and IBM versions of their packages. For those who are willing to pay the price, there is outstanding documentation available in the *Inside Macintosh* volumes. The Apple Program Developers' Association also seems to be a lively concern.

They market an exceptionally neat application development tool named *Prototyper* that allows the programmer to build dialog boxes, menus, windows, and all of the other paraphernalia of object-oriented programming and then to specify how these are to be linked together to make an application. The graphic part of the prototype application can then be run. Once the programmer is satisfied as to the correctness of this part of the program he can then ask *Prototyper* to write out the source code that invokes the resulting resources in one of several dialects of C or Pascal. The source code contains comment lines that tell the programmer where to insert the code that he needs to handle whatever data processing is desired. The various Atari Resource Construction Sets cannot hold a candle to this.

In many ways, however, the Macintosh world has a flavor that can best be described as "kinky." The fact that each Mac file is really two files takes a good deal of getting used to. There is a "resource fork" that contains information about the file and a "data fork" that contains the file data itself. The fact that resource forks of

applications are continually being rewritten is surely one of the factors that allows Mac viruses to spread so easily. This characteristic of the files is very important when the files have to reside on a non-Mac system such as GENie. Fortunately, there is a utility called *Stuffit*, similar to *ARC* in the ST world, which takes care of this problem.

Another kinky feature is a rabid insistence on using the mouse even when it is not appropriate. This is a real annoyance in *MacDraw* and *MacDraft* where exact numeric values are important for drafting. Keyboard entry of the data should be an option in such applications.

Mac programs also seem bound and determined to prevent the user from making any use of his data other than the one the designers had in mind. For example, there seems to be no convenient way to get a copy of a disk directory as an ASCII text file.

The thing that is so kinky that it is nearly a complete turn-off is the missionary attitude of the people who write books on the Mac. *The Macintosh Bible*, which Dave suggests as a useful reference work, is replete with statements like "why should the rest of us .... who wouldn't get within 50 yards of a PC unless it was downwind and hidden behind a bush ...." These are the same zealots who have foisted Pascal onto a generation of computer science students. Such bigotry is counterproductive in the long run because it allows the competition to catch the bigot napping.

Once one gets past these annoyances, however, the essential coherence of the entire structure is truly impressive. Printer drivers and fonts are basically universal rather than being specific to each application. The use of Postscript as a standard for displaying graphic and text information makes for enormous graphic power and adaptability. Apple has set rigorous standards in these matters and developers violate them at their peril. Most programs have a very professional look and a smooth feel, people do not seem to be compelled to invent the wheel over and over again. This sameness and smoothness makes Mac applications highly intuitive for the user. All of this costs money.

If an Atari user simply wanted to get a feel for Mac software, a few short sessions at a friend's Mac would suffice. Atarians take the Spectre route because they want performance that they cannot find in their own world. The areas where this is most apparent are in desktop publishing and possibly CAD. People who use Mac emulation regularly usually limit themselves to a couple of applications that they like better than the ones on the Atari. Everyone has their own favorites in this area and I have not yet done enough exploring to make up my mind.

How well does the Spectre do Mac emulation? It seems pretty good for the few pieces of software that the Pussycat has tried. The small annoyances like special keystroke combinations are not hard to live with

and the screen redraw speed is about what you would expect from a Mac Plus (which is considerably slower than a Mac IIX). Certain very useful items like Apple File Exchange do not work. With the aforementioned precautions regarding shielding, the disk drives seem to work pretty well. On the whole, the Spectre GCR seems to be a useful tool for learning about the Mac in the office, but it may be quite a while before it becomes part of the personal toolkit (inertia and money, you know). The fact that Spectre is totally non-invasive because it simply plugs into the cartridge port is very attractive. As ST add-ons go, the Spectre GCR is not terribly expensive. One can get into business for roughly the cost of a hard disk drive mechanism; other peripherals all work provided that a suitable printer driver is on hand.

The dark side of this business is that the Mac world seems to be moving away from the 68000 to more powerful processors. These systems (Mac II's, IIX's, IICX's,, etc...) seem to be trying to expand upward into the engineering or DTP workstation niche to do battle

with UNIX-based Suns, Apollo's, Iris's and the rest on their way down the price scale. Where is this going to leave the personal user? Will the Mac Plus and its siblings become orphans in the process? How will Dave Small and his allies handle these challenges? Stay tuned.

A *Current Notes* colleague pointed out that the Atari ST is, in some ways, more fun than the Mac. You can get color in your games or applications without going to a great deal of expense and you do have the choice of operating in TOS or TTP mode for ease of programming applications that do not need the mouse. File structures are simpler because there is no need for a separate resource fork, thus affording at least a modest degree of portability to the MS-DOS world. It is actually easier to customize an ST into a special-purpose computing engine and it is easier to reconfigure after you have started.

As a result of this, Atari users can get the best of two worlds: "power without the price" from Atari and "power at a price" from Apple. Thanks again, Dave.

**Oct 6-7**

## **WAACE AtariFest '90** **by John Barnes**

**Reston, VA**

The AtariFest planning team of the Washington Area Atari Computer Enthusiasts is busy working to make the 1990 event the best ever. The dates and site for 1990 have been set: 6 and 7 October at the Sheraton Reston in Reston, Va. This modern, attractive conference facility offers plenty of nicely arranged space for exhibits, demonstrations, seminars, and hospitality.

Pricing for vendor space is being determined, and arrangements for setup are being made with a professional exhibit firm.

Conducting the show in a hotel will allow longer show hours on the two days and increased opportunities for demonstrations and seminars. Exhibitors and out of town visitors will find the in-hotel location far more comfortable and convenient.

The decision to use commercial space was partly determined by the end of our partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Adult and Community Education and partly by our own desire to afford vendors and visitors a better show.

Potential exhibitors should expect to receive information packets during February. We will need financial commitments from participants soon thereafter in order to conduct a suitable promotional campaign.

This change of approach will bring the cost of the WAACE show more into line with similar Atari shows. In order to keep costs within reason we will need strong support from the entire Atari community.

We are making this announcement at such an early date in order to give everyone a chance to organize their schedules. We hope that all of you will help us to make this event an enjoyable experience for all East Coast Atarians.

Further information on this subject can be obtained by contacting the WAACE Chairman, Mr. John D. Barnes, at 301-652-0667 or by GEMail to J.D.BARNES or R.BROWN3. Watch for new contact names in mid January.





## Share the Fantasy

**SYRA:** Hi, my name is Syra, I'm 23 years old and I have blonde hair. I like movies, horseback riding, gourmet cooking, and my favorite CRPG is *Dungeonmaster*.

**GEOFFREY:** Hi, I'm Geoff. I'm 24, I like concerts, fast food, imported beer, football, and hanging out. Oh yeah, I'm really into Lord British, too.

**ROSELLA:** Ah, some fresh voices! Do either of you know what's going on with *Hero's Quest*? The Sierra Creative Interpreter should've churned it out by now. They did a nice job on the IBM version, even Scorpia liked it. Combat looks a little like that in-the-visor perspective from *Iron Lord*.

**REIS:** And when's *Origin* releasing *Windwalker*? It's out for the Amiga.

**JAANA:** Yeah, and what about *Pool of Radiance* from SSI? The Mac version's already out, of all things.

**BORIS:** Hey Syra, have you finished *Chaos Strikes Back* yet? I just finished it, and guess what? I did it without mapping!

**SYRA:** Yes, I finished it, too, though I don't think many people have. When I first heard there would be a *Dungeonmaster* module, I said great. When I heard it wouldn't have any new monsters or objects, I said not so great. Which was echoed by the playtesters, so FTL went back to work and added thirteen new monsters. I was back to great. But having finished it, I can't say *Chaos* is a great game; it's to *Dungeonmaster* what *Phantasie II* was to *Phantasie I*.

# DIAL 976-CRPG CALL NOW.... IT'S LIVE!

**BORIS:** I understand your point, it's more of the same thing, but if that thing is *Dungeonmaster*, I'll take more of the same anytime! Besides, the increased intensity of combat in *Chaos* was different. In *DM*, you fought one dragon; in *Chaos*, you gotta take out a whole nest of 'em. It wasn't as long a game, but it was tough, tough, tough! Some puzzles were nearly impossible, and the monsters come at you in leagues from the moment you start.

## Love at 2400 Baud

**ALEX:** Hi, Syra, I'm Alex. You sure have a sexy voice. I haven't even bought *Chaos* yet, can you start from the beginning?

**SYRA:** Sure, Alex. Haven't I heard you somewhere before? Anyway, the game is stand-alone, you don't have to own *Dungeonmaster* to play it. But there are no *DM* docs in the *Chaos* package, so the few who haven't played the original are pretty much out of luck. The game and graphics systems for *Chaos Strikes Back* are exactly like *Dungeonmaster*, and if I have to describe that to you, you're on the wrong phone line. It comes with a game disk and a utility disk, and lists for \$39.95. The utility disk has a short graphic sequence of the events leading to *Chaos's* revenge, a simple paint program to edit your champions' portraits, an aid for stuck gamers called the Hint Oracle, and most importantly, the utility called Make New Adventure. You may use any champions from *DM*, but they should be fairly advanced characters. There is a prison in *Chaos*, analogous to the Hall of Champions, with all new multi-

adepts curiously over-represented by the animal kingdom. The portraits of *Chaos* champions old and new are much better than in *DM*, and you will have to be quite an artist to improve them with the editor. Once a saved game disk has been made into a new adventure, it's on to the show. You enter the dungeon stripped clean, so cast a *FUL* spell and get ready to stick and move. I'm going to the fridge for a diet coke, can you take it from here, Boris?

**BORIS:** Sure. Let's back up and talk about the Hint Oracle. Some people have criticized it, saying that it gives the game away. I think it was implemented perfectly. In order to use it, you must save the game at the exact location that has you stumped, exit the game, boot the utility disk to access the Hint Oracle, obtain the needed information, then load *Chaos* again to continue playing. *Chaos*, like *DM*, is compressed and takes forever and a day to load, so who's going to go through all that unless they are really stuck? Of course, if you own two machines you could sort of, er, *multitask*, so to speak. Anyway, there are four mazes for the four classes: KU (Fighter), ROS (Ninja), NETA (Priest), and DAIN (Wizard). At the end of each maze you've got to get this supramorphic piece of rock called corbum ore and...well, I'm not going to be accused of giving the game away.

**SYRA:** Hey, the caffeine queen's back, coke in hand. I caught the last part of what you said, Boris. We should try to explain about the dungeon layout: it's very unorthodox, and full of deviousness deluxe. Those four mazes begin on one square and eventually meet in the

middle of the dungeon. There are four levels with lots of pits and stairways, and one pitted area I defy anybody not to map, Boris's orientating proficiency notwithstanding. Also, the program apparently constructs a different dungeon for each player based on her previous moves. I'm really fuzzy on the details of this feature. I can't tell if there are infinite possibilities or not, and if not, how many variations there are. Understanding exactly what the dungeon interpreter does and how it does it is going to be as intriguing a puzzle to solve as the game itself. Downloading maps might be a waste of time, but I just can't tell yet.

BORIS: I haven't gone through a second time yet, but I have a feeling you can do it pretty quickly. The monsters aren't really that tough, it's just that there are so many of them. Running's a good strategy sometimes. Anyway, that's part of the idea behind the dungeon creation feature: so that playing *Chaos* a second time gives you a new layout. I don't think it's going to give the game incredible replayability, though. Oh, about the monsters: there are some great new ones, like the Mouths, and most of your old nemeses from the original game have returned. The old gang have spawned a few mutations: there are new knights and new worms, to name two. The ending is somewhat anti-climactic, but isn't that a CRPG tradition? Name me two fantasy games that end with a bang. Anyway, if *Dungeonmaster* is a 10, then *Chaos Strikes Back* is at least an 8, in my opinion.

## Vapors of Radiance

FLINT: Well met, all. Name's Flint. I'm 135 years old, five foot two with a long, braided beard, and I still prefer the term *dwarf*, despite the movement towards *little people*. I'm into precious metals, spelunking, and human-throwing contests. 'Fraid I've some bad news about *Pool of Radiance*...

JAANA: It's about time somebody answered my question.

FLINT: Seems it's in limbo. I don't really understand the UBI Soft/U.S. Gold/SSI web of relations, but *Pool* has become entangled to the point it may never get released.

JAANA: Oh, great. Guess I won't be transferring *Pool* characters into *Hillsfar* for *Azure Bonds*.

FLINT: Also, the British scribes have mentioned an ST version of the excellent medieval strategy game *Sword of Aragon*, but Linda Blanchard of SSI knows of no plans for an Atari port. On a more uplifting note, I've been playing *Dragons of Flame*, SSI's sequel to the Dragonlance action game *Heroes of the Lance*. I'll have to get back with you next session on whether it corrects the first installment's weak points.

## Ultima V Calling!

M'LORD TREBOR: Good evening, everyone. Many of you know of me; I am called Trebor. Today, January the 6th, I have had the pleasure of listening to "Fanfare for the Virtuous" and fourteen other pieces by Ken Arnold through my Tweety Board-equipped ST.

GEOFF: (Gasp!) *Ultima V* is out for the ST!?

TREBOR: Yes, *Warriors of Destiny* is at last ready for the ST. The good procurers of Origin have favored me with an advance copy, but it could be available to all within the month. This is even greater providence than it seems; because of Origin's split with British MicroProse, the Amiga version, it is said, may never come to pass. The UK firm was scheduled to do both the ST and Amiga conversions; I'm grateful they started with the Atari port first.

GEOFF: So what's it like?

TREBOR: Like the EGA version, graphically, which is a considerable improvement over *Ultima IV*. I've only just begun the quest, but I can tell you that the combat system has very much come into its own. The leap in overall sophistication that we saw from *III* to *IV* is not as great as

in *V*, but the fine touches *Warriors of Destiny* has received are impressive, indeed. It comes on three single-sided disks and draws you into the story compellingly. I should have all of the details for you in about a month. Curiously, I had to adjust the vertical and horizontal on my Hitachi-made SC1224 monitor to eliminate rolling and align the screen, which didn't entirely solve the alignment problem. But I've mentioned this to Origin. The original and legendary SC1224 monitors have no problems with the program.

ROSELLA: How are you, Trebor? My father will be delighted to know we talked. I've been trying to find out when *Hero's Quest* will be available. Have you news?

TREBOR: Your father and I go back many years, child. Yes, I have the news you seek. *Hero's Quest* could be available for the ST in February. *Bloodwych* denizens can purchase a data disk with twenty-five new levels to explore. *Windwalker* may be a few months away. I was asked to mention that in Current Notes' recent Best of the Quest II feature, a quotation regarding *Bloodwych* was inadvertently attributed to Robert Millard. Those comments were actually the opinions of BQ2 panelist Al Giovetti. And, if anyone has inquired, FTL is going to try to do something about the documentation problem for *Chaos Strikes Back* owners have who haven't played the original game.

REIS: Thanks, Trebor. I've been asking about *Windwalker*. And earlier tonight, somebody had mentioned the doc problem for *CSB* rookies.

## The Same Old Lines

ALEX: Say, Syra, are you still on the line?

SYRA: Still here, Alex.

ALEX: Speaking of *Bloodwych*, I have the new data disk. How about if I bring it over to your place for a little two-player action?

SYRA: I thought you'd never ask.

TREBOR: Ah, youth!



*If you have the paint program **Spectrum 512**, you can enjoy a disk of colorful clip art to make creating works of art quick and easy. All courtesy of the Marshall Artist.*

**by Steve Marshall**

A couple of years ago I began developing a series of high resolution clip art disks for use in desktop publishing. These art disks were successful and a lot of fun to do so I thought I'd try to develop a series of color clip art disks using *DEGAS Elite*, at that time the premier paint program for the ST. The main problem I encountered was the palette. Either I had to decide on a single palette and use that same palette in developing all of my clip art images (which became impossibly restrictive) or I had to rely on the user to change the colors as they added images (which was terribly cumbersome).

### **And Then Came Spectrum**

The problem became so frustrating that I shelved the idea. Then I heard about *Spectrum 512*, a new paint program that allowed all 512 colors to be displayed simultaneously. More importantly, it allowed images to be imported and rendered accurately regardless of the original palette. This appeared to be the answer to my problem and I quickly placed my order. A few weeks later I had my copy and began experimenting with this sophisticated program. It was all I had hoped for and I found myself spending every available minute trying out functions and experimenting with the many special effects.

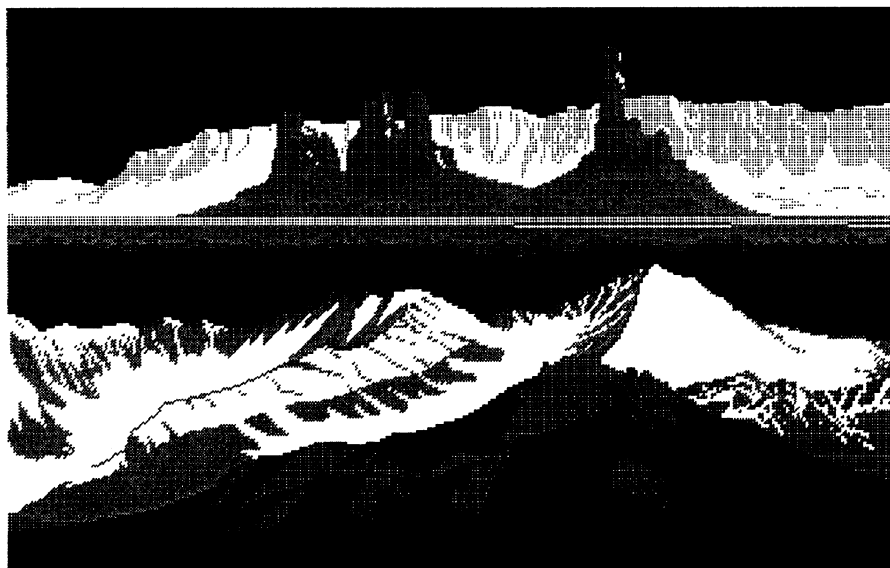
Other people also purchased *Spectrum 512* and I began to find that for many of them, *Spectrum*

was just too complicated and difficult to use. Too often, *Spectrum* was being used solely to view the many public domain digitized pictures or to touch-up photos captured with Computereyes. No one seemed to be using it as the creative tool it was designed to be. My mind went back to my idea of color clip art and I began to wonder if such a collection might encourage people to rediscover the wonderful qualities of *Spectrum*.

So I collected up the few images I had saved of my previous efforts and began to build a new collection of clip art. I wanted to provide a variety of images that the average person might enjoy using to build pictures. A lot of people can create simple scenes but stumble when it comes to drawing realistic objects or animals to place in their scenes so I decided to create a collection of images under a variety of subjects like animals,

buildings, trees, vehicles, etc. Some of these images I created from scratch, drawing them in *DEGAS* and importing them into *Spectrum* or creating them directly in *Spectrum* and making use of powerful functions of *Spectrum*. Other images I digitized and then touched up within *Spectrum*. Several months later I had the first disk finished and ready to market.

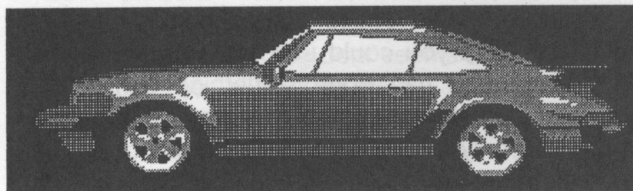
Unfortunately, the interest in such a color clip art disk was not as great as I hoped (at least from a marketing point of view) and I decided not to invest any more time or money in the effort. The disk I had spent months preparing languished in my desk for nearly a year. Then, this summer, I attended a local user group meeting and watched someone demonstrating *Spectrum*. The thought of my color clip art disk came back to me. I mentioned it to the demonstrator and he was intrigued with the idea.



And I decided that the results of my hard work should not lie in a desk drawer. So I contributed the disk to the club's public domain library. And I have made the same offer to *Current Notes* (CN #410).

### Using Color Clip Art

Using my color clip art disk (I never came up with a clever name for the disk) is very easy. Of course, you do need *Spectrum 512* in order to make use of the clip art. Once you have loaded in *Spectrum*, decide which images on the disk you want to use. Load in each file, grab the images you want and move them into the buffer using *Spectrum's* block function (PIC->BUF). On a 520ST you should be able to hold about 2 full screens worth of images. On a 1040ST, you should be able to fit almost all of them.

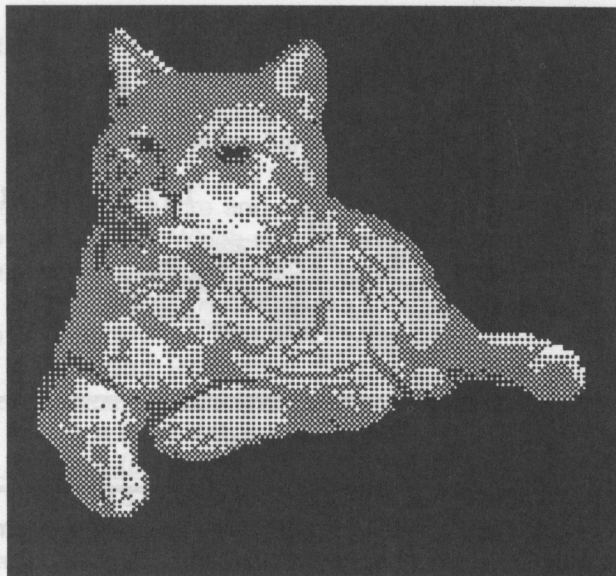


Once you have loaded in all of the clip art into the buffer, you can start creating your masterpiece. Begin with the background, either creating a sky and ground, or use the supplied sky and mountain clip art images to form the basis of your background. Adding images from the buffer is simple. Just select the BLOCK function, then go to the buffer by selecting BUF->PIC. This will display the clip buffer and you can scroll through the images by right-clicking and dragging the mouse up or down. When you find an image you want to add to your picture, left click and drag a box around it. When you return to your picture, the clip art image will appear as a green rectangle. Hold down the SHIFT key while you move the mouse to size it, then press the left mouse button to place it on the screen. (Refer to your *Spectrum* manual for more details.)

You might want to begin adding trees and buildings. Remember to work from the back of your picture to the front. Keep the rules of perspective in mind, sizing images smaller if they are to appear in the distance and keeping them large if they appear in the foreground. Use the magnify mode for touch-up work once your images have been placed on the screen.

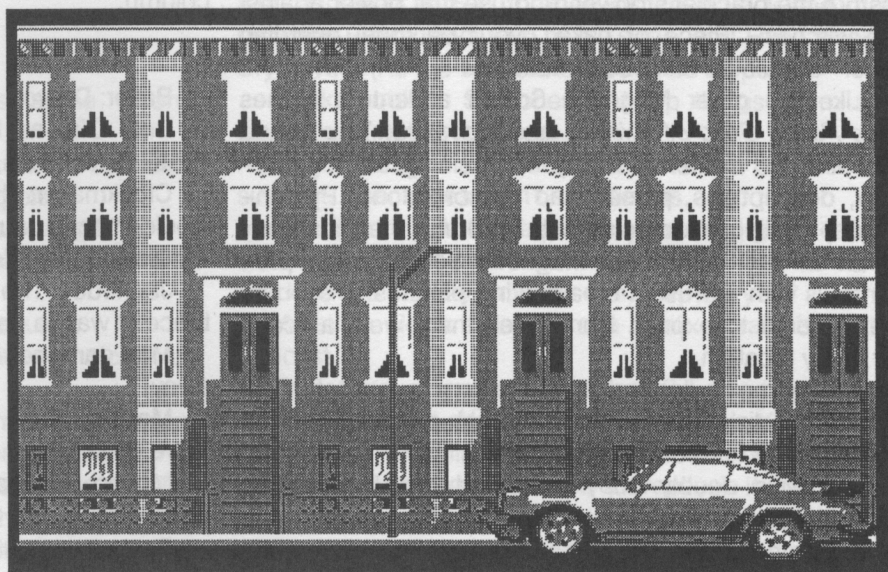
### Have Fun With Spectrum

It's very satisfying to see the results of my efforts finally being put to use. I hope those of you who have *Spectrum* will try out the color clip art disk and maybe even create a disk of your own for others to share. It's a great way to have fun with *Spectrum* and create works of art without investing a lot of time in drawing detailed objects.



### Time To Say Goodbye

Finally, I have to say that this is my last column for *Current Notes*. The demands of work and school, coupled with time spent working on my new game, leave me too little time to devote to writing this column. I have enjoyed the past year and am indebted to Joe Waters for the opportunity to stretch my wings a little and express myself in words to a national audience. In the words of those two wine salesmen, thank you for your support.



*Example of picture created utilizing SPECTRUM clip art*





## Stuck in a Rut

by Sam Wright

### Jinxter

Right. Yurss. Well, now. This wosname, game, called *Jinxter* (Atari ST, \$39.95) has me baffled. Completely. Defnly. I solved it, good enough, if solvin' it's considered turnin' up dead, selflessly savin' the life of a dog in the process (which reminds me, the bakery's 'avin' a sale on cheese san'wiches)—a dog I've not even 'ad the pleasure of meetin'.

Er, excuse me. This game does grow on you after awhile, narmean?

Ahem.

Once upon a time, the late magician Turani bestowed upon the people of Aquitania an enchanted bracelet, granting good luck to everyone while keeping the evil forces of Aquitania's Green Witches at bay. Recently, Jannedor and her fellow Green Witches have conspired to overthrow the powers of the bracelet. By bribing mortals into concealing all of the bracelet's charms, the bracelet is as good as processed cheese.

You've been the mortal selected by the Department of Guardians to find the charms, find the bracelet, restore the bracelet's power, and use that power against the witches. "Piece of cake," your personal guardian says. "Should be finished by teatime."

Like the other Magnetic Scrolls adventure games (*The Pawn*, *Guild of Thieves*, and *Corruption*) published by Rainbird, *Jinxter* is highly entertaining, with gameplay, descriptions, parser, and humor (Monty Pythonesque) rivaling Infocom's best. To break the monotony of an all-text adventure, Magnetic Scrolls again presents us with the usual breathtaking pictures of scenery we've come to expect. I only wish there were a scene for every location.

The game is loaded into memory except for the occasional disk accesses to load each picture. Graphics can be turned off for faster gameplay.

*Jinxter* is doubly copy-protected: by disk and by requiring you to enter a certain word on a certain page in a certain column on a certain line in the documentation. The latter was not much of a hassle, considering it only popped up once each time I played the game, but I'm always nervous about using the original disk.

*Jinxter's* parser accepts complete and multiple sentences, but it's very picky about how you word things. Remember that there is a difference between putting something in something and putting something on something.

Keep and maintain your really amazing luck. With so many Aquitanians down on theirs, you need to lead the way. Whenever you don't feel as lucky as you once did, replay that incident another way. Believe me, it'll pay off on one of your confrontations with Jannedor.

Indeed, there are different ways to solving things. While being correct and enabling you to continue with the game, they may decrease your luck or not increase your point value. Save the game often, because you'll constantly be returning to those situations and others. (You may realize, for example, you're missing something that might've been located at the very beginning of the game.)

Instead of restarting entirely, you can at least pick it up from a few hundred moves into the game.) In addition, many times you'll do something you wish you could take back. A simple saved game before any significant move will prevent lots of aggravation and tedium. Saved games take up one filename of around 11K of space.

Point value, for adventure purists, is extremely important. Time was you could use your score to determine whether you had done something correctly. In *Jinxter*, you may do something thinking it deserves five or ten points, only to receive nothing. In this case, think of another, better way to do what you just did.

I finished the game with 175 points, 30 points off. Thirty points is such a large percentage that I'm not quite sure if I truly did finish. If you can do better or know how to obtain the extra, miscellaneous points, please let me know. I'll update the clues in a future column.

### CHARACTERS

Baker: Do you really want to work for him?

Bull: Ole, as the toreador would say. But actions speak louder than words.

Clockmaker: If his attention were distracted, he wouldn't have caught it in time.

Cloud: Even clouds with silver linings can ice up.

Jannedor: The clause of the staff memo stated the bracelet was to get rid of her.

Mad gardener: He can hear that door opening a mile away!

Maggie: Sing a song of what? You should listen more closely.

Mouse: At least you don't have to keep it from squeaking.

Postmistress: She's jumps at the littlest things because she can't hear well.

Ticket inspector (bus): Follow the rules, or else you'll be headed sixteen paces due east.

Unicorn: An element from its days of yore might put it back to the way it once was.

Worms: The fastest-eating worms alive!

Xam: Wake up, he's been captured.

## LOCATIONS

Even with descriptions on verbose, all objects aren't necessarily in full view when first entering a room. Be sure to not only examine everything that is listed in the room description, but look inside it, look under it, and look behind it.

My copy of *Jinxter* (version 1.05) displayed an endless loop of "and"s when trying to go south in the pub, an invalid direction.

Doing so may hold your suspense for the first fifteen minutes, but soon your eyes'll get blurry, "and" you'll end up resetting your computer. Occasionally the pub's southern direction would also give me about half a screen of secret code, but attempting to decipher any of it will give you a headache. Curiously enough, the southern wall of the pub is the bar.

Airlock: Pay attention to the buttons. You don't want to flood the place, do you?

Bakery: Aquitania has a high employment rate.

Beer Garden: Well, well, well, what do we have here?

Boathouse: The sliding door seems a bit rusty.

Carousel: They all look so real!

Dungeon: The dumbwaiter can hold more than food.

Marble Steps: Afterwards, a simple moving is all that's needed.

Pub: How do you spell walrus?

Sanctum Sanctorum: Jannedor's always in her room unless her attention can be diverted (by another person, perhaps?).

Underwater: You'd be out of luck if you got lost on your way back.

## OBJECTS

Beer: That Old Moosebolter is some strong, extinguishing stuff!

Bottle, milk: Never cry over spilt milk, especially when you can replace it with something else.

Bottle, plastic oil: Have you tried squeezing it?

Bread: Great! He'll hire you and you'll work there for the rest.

Of your. Life. Starting tomorrow, of course.

Bung: Yes, probably the most obvious choice. Now to make it bigger.

Candle: Think of it as an eternal flame. And speaking of bangles stop dillydallying and find that bracelet!

Chandelier: Too bad you don't have any of Willy Wonka's burping soda to float you up there.

Charm, amethyst: Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your...

Charm, dragon: It's NOT one, two, three strikes you're...

Charm, moose: Hey, Rocky, watch me pull a rabbit out of a...

Charm, pelican: Patty cake, Patty cake...

Charm, unicorn: Lights, camera...

Charm, walrus: When Santa Claus gets your...

Crystal ball: Look into the ball and what do you see? Scenes of the future and all of them free. But which is the correct one? Which should be the correct one? Ask the pelican. He'll know what needs to be done.

Dome: Sliding numbers in a magic square passes the time quickly.

Door, sliding: Remember the joke about how to stop a mouse from squeaking?

Fireplace (hall): Ash in.

Fireplace (pub): Ash out.

Flour: Let's sieve what we can do.

Hat: I don't know about you, but I think it makes a great holder. Also, it can dull light from ten different perspectives.

Hole (canoe): Mighty big hole, there. Let's hope he wanted to be buried (or rather, half-buried) at sea.

Key, iron: Yours.

Key, plastic: U.S.P.S.'s.

Key, rusty: Xam's.

Ladder: Almost! You just need a little boost.

Mailbox (Xam's): The key is to make something similar. You'd probably get burned in real life, but anything's possible in an adventure game.

Manacles: Don't get too tied up with the mechanics of things.

Mousetrap: A watched mousetrap never snaps.

Oil: How to get the oil out is harder than figuring out how to prevent milk from curdling.

Oil lamp: Pitch a wild one!

Saddle: Clouds don't like riders on the storm. Hide it.

Safe: Hurry up or you'll run out of time. It began at 1 a.m. and went to 5 p.m., then switched back and forth between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m.? It's too late! Ho! Larceny! Cry havoc! (As the wiry old bimbo once yelped.)

Sock, woollen: Stretches to keep things warm and soundproof, that's for shore.

Spectacles: You use sunglasses to see better in the sunlight. Spectacles aren't sunglasses.

Ticket (train): At those prices, you could get a couple of beers!

Umbrella: If Mary Poppins can, why not you?

Weather clock: Looks like a spell of rain is in the forecast.

Questions, comments, criticisms? I can be reached care of *Current Notes* or at P.O. Box 1853, North Springfield, Virginia 22151 (please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for replies). If you have a modem, I can be contacted on Merlin's Litterbox at (703) 250-7303 (3/12/24/9600 HST bauds), located in Fairfax, Virginia and PC-Pursuitable through the Washington, D.C. area.

# STARTING BLOCK

by Richard Gunter

# For the ARC of It...



Happy New Year, everybody!

During the last several weeks, I noticed a number of questions on local Bulletin Boards from users who were having trouble with ARC programs and files.

"Aha, inspiration!" said I, forgetting that Mr. Murphy and his colleagues watch me closely. As soon as I thought of doing a column, every programmer on both sides of the Atlantic released at least one new version of his favorite archiving tool.

Figures.

Now I'm starting to get confused, what with ARC, ZIP, LZH, ZOO programs proliferating like monkeys in a (ahem) zoo. In the next column or three, we'll see if we can bring some order out of this: learn what file archivers are, what's available, and maybe even learn to use the things.

## Archivers?

The first thing we need to understand is what an archiver is. In a nutshell, it allows you to combine a bunch of files into a single file. A fairly simple idea, right?

## Whole Disk "Archivers"

There are two ST programs I know about that will convert a floppy disk into a file: *CodeCopy*, a commercial product from CodeHead, and *Magic Shadow Archiver*, a shareware program by Steve Feinstein.

These programs construct a file whose contents is an image of an entire floppy disk, including boot sector data. They also remember disk format information, and thus can reproduce the original disk.

In general, this type of program allows you to retrieve individual data

files only by recreating the entire original floppy, then copying the files you want.

These should be considered special-purpose programs, useful if you have self-booting disks (like demos) that you don't use often and would like to store away in somewhat less space. They're also of use to commercial distributors and club librarians who need to make many copies.

It's the file-oriented archivers that we're really interested in.

## File Archivers

File archivers allow you to combine one or more *files* into a single file. File archivers usually use highly sophisticated data compression algorithms to conserve space, and they maintain a "directory" as part of each archive file, which permits considerable freedom in managing the archive and its contents.

Note the distinction between the two types of programs. The "whole disk archiver" operates on an entire floppy disk, while the file archiver operates on individual files. In addition, most file archivers have a rich set of options, allowing files to be added, deleted, or extracted.

It's important to note that an archive file may contain several files, but they are compressed, and *not* in a form that you can use directly. The data files need to be *extracted* by a compatible archiver program; this restores them to their original form.

## Why Archive?

One reason is evident on every electronic bulletin board system (BBS) in the country: several files can be combined into one archive and transmitted by modem to

another computer. Download a single archive file, and you have a complete package.

Moreover, since the file archivers compress their contents, download time is less than it would have been for downloading all the parts separately. Saves time and money.

A file archiver can be useful for personal or professional work as well, because it allows you to consolidate related files for permanent storage.

These columns, for instance, consist of word processing document files containing the text, screen snapshots or other illustrations, and output files from a desktop publisher. I like to save all this stuff in case it's ever needed again, so I archive the files on a floppy disk—reducing the clutter on my hard drive.

## Different Systems

The format's the thing that distinguishes different archiving systems. Format of the archive files, that is.

The developers of each system designed a general format for their archive files, nailing down what the internal directory looks like, details of each data compression algorithm used, the way compressed files are stored within the archive, and so on.

We can usually recognize the system used to make a given archive file by looking at its file extension (the "EXT" part of NAME.EXT).

**ARC** indicates the "ARC" system, originated by System Enhancement Associates, Inc. The ARC format is the eldest of the bunch, and still the most widely used.

**LZH** indicates a system developed by Haruyasu Yoshizaki for MS-DOS computers and ported to the ST by Jon Webb and Bart van Herk.

**ZIP** indicates a system originated by Phil Katz in the MS-DOS community. ZIP's popularity seems to be growing in the MS-DOS community.

**ZOO** indicates a system developed by Rahul Dhesi for the MS-DOS community, and ported to the ST by Daan Jitta.

There are other systems in use elsewhere. I haven't mentioned archiving systems used primarily in the Macintosh and Unix communities, for instance.

## Compatibility

Unfortunately, different archiving systems are **not** mutually compatible. In fact, they are absolutely, totally, 100% INCOMPATIBLE with each other.

Try to feed an LZH file to a program made to deal with ARC format, and the best you can hope for is that it won't work. You might crash your system with some combinations.

## Identification Aids

The best identification aid is the file name extension, as noted above. If the file's creator didn't use the correct extension, you could have a problem.

You can try different archiver programs on such a file, but watch out for a system crash. Another possibility is a program ,WHATIS, written by Bill Aycock, one of CompuServe's Atari Sysops. This little widget will examine a file and report what sort of file it thinks you have. It can be fooled, though.

## Different Computers

Since the heart of each archiving system is its file format, any number of archiver programs can be written to process or create a file in that format. Specifically, such programs can be written for

different types of computers. Where this has been done, an archive file produced on an IBM machine can be processed on an ST.

There is a little problem, though. If the original developer adds a new compression algorithm to his system, the new feature may not be quickly available for other computers. Archives created on an IBM machine with the new program can't be processed on an ST until the ST program has been updated.

In one case (ZIP format), only an extractor has been written for the ST, and it won't deal with files created by the latest IBM version of ZIP. Thus you can UnZIP some (but not all) ZIP files, and you can't create a ZIP file at all on the ST—at this writing, anyway.

## Which One's for Me?

The attached table provides a list of commonly used ST archiving systems and programs. You'll probably want at least one program supporting the ARC format because of its wide use. A number of folks favor *DCOPY* because of its speed and menu-style command structure; it tends to run faster than the *ARC 5.21* family. *DCOPY* is also a general-purpose file utility.

*ARC 6.02* (just out) claims full compatibility with the IBM version. It supports automatic processing for folders and their contents, and also speed improvements over the *ARC 5.21* programs.

You'll probably also want to get *LHARC 0.51*; the commercial time-sharing services are accepting uploads in LZH format, and they're showing up on BBSs as well.

For personal use, take your pick. LZH often yields dramatic improvements over ARC in terms of storage space, but isn't as fast as some of the ARC programs.

As for *ZOO*, I dunno. It does offer some facilities for recovering corrupted files, and support for handling folders and subfolders. The system doesn't seem to be in very wide use as yet, and the appearance of *ARC 6.02* may hamper its acceptance.

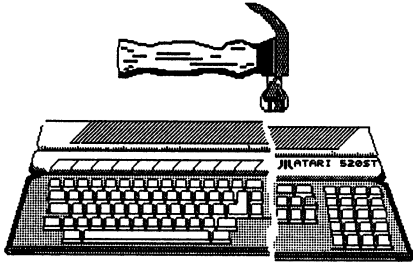
*ATUNZIP* is a partial implementation, supporting extraction only. You needn't bother with it unless you need to UnZIP some files from the IBM community. Not much hope for the ZIP system until someone writes a full ZIP program for the ST.

Next time we'll take a close look at using *ARC 6.02*.

## A Sampler of Archiving Systems

Format	Program	Comments
ARC	ARC 5.21	"Squash" support; not very fast
	ARC 5.21B	Faster, a few bugs
	ARC 5.21C	Some bugs fixed
	ARC 6.02	Claims full compatibility with IBM; no "Squash" support.
	DCOPY	Faster than ARC 5.21; partial "Squash"
	ARCIT	Handles folders; probably not like ARC 6.02
LZH	LHARC 0.41	Not speedy; has a few bugs
	LHARC 0.51	Faster; some bugs fixed
ZIP	ATUNZIP	Supports extraction only; partial MS-DOS compatibility
ZOO	ZOO	Handles folders





## Small Is Beautiful

Small utilities may make your life less miserable

To avoid any misunderstandings: this is still the *ST Toolbox* column, and I am not going to give away any T-shirts or buttons. This month's title just reflects this month's subjects.

### Hard Cold Cache v.3.5

A disk cache is a small program running in the background, which can increase your disk reading speed significantly by reading into a memory buffer. Quite often a subsequent read operation may request data already in this buffer; if this is the case, the data will be fetched from the buffer (without accessing the disk), reducing the operation time and drive wear. All this is quite transparent to the reading program, which still "thinks" it is actually reading from the disk.

*Hard Cold Cache*, a shareware program by Robert E. Owens, is well-designed, well-behaved and easy to use, which makes it my cache of choice.

Three programs come in the package. First, the actual cache program (just 2.5k), to be placed in your \AUTO\ folder and forgotten about. Second and third, the cache configuration program, coming in two flavors: as a stand-alone .PRG file and as a desktop accessory.

The dialog-driven configuration programs allow you to choose drives to be cached. The changes are effective immediately, but also can be saved as defaults for the next boot-up. You can also define the buffer size (64–128k is the usually recommended choice).

These programs also know how to access the variables storing the performance statistics (maintained by the cache program itself). A nice touch, allowing you to see the percentage of hits (i.e. instances when a sector was fetched from the buffer instead of being

read from the disk) and the total time savings.

The time saved during disk-intensive sessions (such as program development) can be quite impressive. Using a 1-Mbyte machine, I can only afford to cache the hard drive partition with the programming tools and source code; my buffer size is 32k. Still, the disk access time saved during one working day spent on heavy programming is usually above 30 minutes!

Another example, involving operations frequently accessing the disk directory: the Prospero make utility checks the consistency of my Pascal library in 179 seconds; using *Cold Hard Cache* this time was cut down to 57 seconds!

With floppy-based systems, the speed gain becomes *much* more dramatic. There is, however, a catch here (with Atari, not the program author, to be blamed): check whether the floppy change in your cached drive is properly detected. Load a disk containing some folders. Open and close some of them. You will see that, after accessing a given folder for the first time, the subsequent accesses are *fast* — your disk drive will not spin at all. This is good: you are getting a 100% hit rate. Then, while a folder contents is being displayed in a desktop window, remove the current floppy and put in another one. Close the folder. If the window displays the contents of the *new* disk, you are in business, the floppy change is detected properly. If not, *do not* cache this drive! Strange things can happen to your data! (Other drives can still be cached safely).

*Hard Cold Cache* comes with a documentation file. It is small, cheap (\$5 donation recommended) and useful. Get it.

*Hard Cold Cache (shareware): Robert E. Owens III, 34 Pinecrest Dr., Covington, LA 70433*

**COLD HARD CACHE 3.4**

**Performance:**

Average access time:	27 ms
Approx. elapsed read time:	5 sec
Approx. time savings:	5 sec

**Stats:**

	TRIES	HITS	%
Reads:	393	286	52.4
Write Optimizations:	0		

**Settings:**

Cache Buffers: 80

Max. Multi-Sector Read Size: 4

Drives Cached:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

Buttons: Save, Cancel, Reset Stats, OK

Copyright 1989, Robert E. Owens III

### Double Click Utilities

After having heard some good things about the first commercial offering of Double Click Software (the authors of the popular *Double Click Formatter* available in the public domain), I decided to give it a try.

The disk comes with a small but complete and well-written manual (which, after the first

reading, should rest on the shelf, anyway) and contains six separate small programs.

Most of these programs have close public domain or shareware equivalents, but—in most cases, at least—they represent some improvement in performance or features over their free cousins. Their usefulness varies, in my judgement, from almost none to moderate. All programs behave well (with *very* few exceptions mentioned below) and work as advertised, so basing your buying decision on the published specifications, without the hands-on experience, is quite safe.

### DC RAMIT – Another RAMdisk?

Maybe not *just* another RAMdisk; the authors claim it is faster than any other RAMdisk available. On the other hand, the speed differences between different RAMdisks mean almost nothing in normal use, so while I can appreciate the claimed speed as a technical feat, as a user I do not care much about it. *DC RAMIT* also has some uncommon features. For example, it emulates the structure of a floppy (with tracks and sectors), so it can be re-formatted or image-copied. Again, this is not a feature you will need often.

*DC RAMIT* can be run as a desktop accessory or as a stand-alone program, although in the latter case the only thing you can do with it is copying data to and from it, as the ramdisk is de-installed upon leaving the program.

A minor nuisance is that *DC RAMIT* kept my floppy drives spinning continuously when I tested it. Luckily, I do not use it at all: my old trusty *YARD* (and recently the *HRamdisk* from CodeHead Software) do all I need.

### DC Desktop Organizer

*DC DSKORG* is a nifty utility, which will take your DESKTOP.INF file and re-make it into a stand-alone program (just over 1k in size). You can have as many of these programs as you wish; clicking on the chosen one will redefine your current desktop appropriately (window and icon positions, installed applications, text vs. icon display etc.).

Once again, depending on your working habits, you may find this program useful or not. Most of us are used to a given desktop window configuration, and many use the *NeoDesk* from Gribniff Software—these groups will find no use for *DC DSKORG*. If, however, you *have* a need for re-defining your desktop organization on the fly, then *DC DSKORG* will come in handy.

### Self Extracting ARC

*DC SEA* (which stands for Self Extracting ARC) takes a compressed .ARC file, and produces a *new* executable file, with the compressed data embedded inside. Executing this new program will give you the choice between listing the archive contents or extracting (de-compressing) it.

Once again, personally I do not see much use for this program. It does not give you any new options above those given by the many available ARC shell programs working in tandem with the current version of ARC. It is also incompatible with the recent *ARC 6.02ST* (an attempt to self-extract the created file gives a bad header diagnostics). Oh, well, why bother?

### DC ARC Extractor

*DC Xtract* is an ARC extractor. It comes in the form of a desktop accessory only—it cannot be renamed to a .PRG file and run from the desktop (and here this feature would be much more useful than in the *DC RAMIT* case!). It is also small—just above 11k.

*DC Xtract* will take an ARC file and extract the original files from it (it can be also used for listing the archive contents and testing its integrity). It *does* work with files created with *ARC 6.02ST*, and it works very fast, much faster than the *ARC* itself (I have not run any benchmarks, but the factor of four, claimed by the Double Click people is consistent with my impressions). No, it would not automatically de-arc your files into a created folder, nor does it support the newer .LZH (LHARC) archive format.

Who may want to replace (or supplement) their *ARC* and *ARCShell* (or *DeArcIt*) with *DC Xtract*? I can imagine that those of us who use floppy-based systems may find de-archiving of their files significantly more convenient with *DC Xtract*: even when run from a shell, *ARC.TTP* is loaded again and again from disk for every archive.

### DC Deskey 2.0: A Half-step in the Right Direction

This utility (a desktop accessory) is somewhat similar to the *StartKey*, published some years ago in the *STart* magazine. It allows you to define keyboard equivalents for menu entries in any program. Once defined, these equivalents can be saved in a disk file, which will be loaded automatically every time the program is executed (provided that *DC Deskey* is installed, of course).

For example, the early versions (below 3.0) of the *First Word* did not have keyboard equivalents for many frequently invoked functions. Now not only can you assign these functions to keystrokes (say, Alt-F for Find), but you can do it in a manner consistent between various programs you use.

Loading the configuration file in *StartKey* had to be done manually for each program; *DC Deskey* does it automatically. On the other hand, *DC Deskey* has a painful limitation—it allows only for assignment of menu entries, as opposed to other GEM events (like, say, scrolling the window up or down). It also does not allow for re-assignment of keyboard-bound functions. *StartKey*, as buggy as it was, *did* have both these capabilities. Including them into *DC Deskey* would make

it alone worth the price of the whole package, at least for some of us (myself in this number). I still hope somebody (maybe the Double Click people themselves) will provide us with a well-designed, convenient and well-behaved equivalent of *StartKey*.

### DC Squish — Now, We Are Cooking!

This is, from my viewpoint at least, the most useful utility in the package, and it may well justify buying the whole thing.

Remember the German *PACKer* (see the *ST Tool-box* of last September: you will find it among the “PD gems” which were changed into “PD games” in the table of contents). What both *PACKer* and *DC Squish* do, is to compress, sometimes quite significantly, program files on your disks. This not only saves you lots of space, but the resulting programs also load somewhat faster.

The *PACKer* is a no-frills, brute-force program. You have to type in the names of the original and compressed program files, and it will compress only one file at a time. Want another one? Re-run *PACKer*—not too convenient in larger compression sessions. Luckily, you do not have to do it often.

Once packed, a program will run as it always used to (except that it will load faster and occupy less space on disk), as it is automatically decompressed back when loaded. Very, very handy.

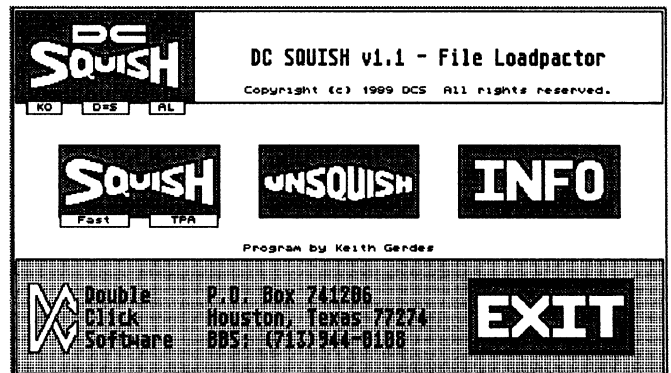
The original *PACKer* would not compress desktop accessories, or even some stand-alone programs (*ST Publisher* from Timeworks in this number). The latter problem has been solved by John Harris from California: another utility, *REMOVESYM.PR*G, will make most of the trouble-making programs packable by the *PACKer*. Mr. Harris has also patched the *PACKer*—now you can enter the file names from the file selector. The new version (*PACK2.PR*G, *UNPACK.PR*G, *REMOVE-SYM.PR*G and documentation) can be downloaded from GEnie; Joe Waters will also gladly include it in the *CN Public Domain Library* if somebody asks him.

Coming back to *DC Squish*—this program is both more capable and more polished than *PACKer*. It can pack (or, if you prefer, squish) the files, unpack them, and show the information on packed files. But, and this is the decisive factor in its favor, it will also pack desktop accessories! The very first day it saved me more than one megabyte on my boot partition! I was also finally able to configure my floppy boot disk (I do not leave home without it) with all the handy accessories I may need when visiting other ST users (and, needless to say, all my friends have STs at home).

Wait, this is not all. The programs packed by *DC Squish* can have the “fast load bit” enabled (this speeds up the loading process under the new TOS 1.4). You can also disable the process of clearing the program’s data memory (remember *Pinhead* by Charles Johnson, another small wonder, see the September *CN*

*issue again*), so that the programs will, again, start up even faster, which is especially noticeable during the boot-up process. Programs packed with *DC Squish* do not need *Pinhead* any more!

Some programs, however, assume that their data memory *is* cleared at the start. Keith Gerdes, the author of *DC Squish*, allows you not only to disable or enable the clearing sequence, but also to replace it with his own, significantly faster. If your program does not run properly with the memory clearing disabled, re-pack it with the appropriate option enabled and it will work just fine. All this is nicely described in the user’s manual, without assuming you are a machine whiz on the one hand, but without insulting your intelligence on the other—a rare balance, indeed.



Last but not least, *DC Squish* is much faster than *PACKer* and more convenient to use.

Does this mean you should throw your trusty *PACKer* away? No. The old hand has one advantage: it compresses files somewhat more efficiently than *DC Squish v.1.1*. For example, *El Cal 1.18* (original size 177.2k) was packed down to 110.5k (or 62%) by *PACKer* and to 118.6k (66%) by *DC Squish*. This seems to be a rule: after packing *Data Manager ST*, *Fontz!*, *Signum II*, *El Cal* and *Publisher ST* (the last one without the .OVL overlays), the average compression factor for *PACKer* was 59%, while for *DC Squish*—63% (the 6% difference between both programs translates into the total of 34.5k of disk space).

This difference is not very significant, but I still keep the *PACKer* for the cases where every byte counts, while using *DC Squish* for desktop accessories.

There are just two things I do not like about *DC Squish*. The first one is the fancy user interface, including dialogs with buttons getting dark when the mouse moves over them. At first, this looks nice, but soon becomes tiring—I often have to move the mouse out of a button to check whether it is selected. There is really no need for this deviation from the standard: it does not offer any new capabilities compared to the “regular” GEM ways. Moreover, the unorthodox use of the right mouse button serves no purpose and just leads to confusion. (Remember the dialog in *DC*

*Formatter*, instructing you to use the right button to exit dialog boxes? The only way to exit *that* dialog was by pressing the *left* button!).

These are, however, minor complaints. You will discover much funnier news when reading the documentation update file, enclosed on disk: "*You are not allowed to distribute squished files to any other person or computer,*" it says, lest others "*benefit without buying the software.*" Now, I understand that the loader embedded into each squished program contains some copyrighted code, but still, this limitation seems, from my viewpoint at least, unreasonable (not to say ridiculous). You cannot squish a public domain game (or another freely distributed program) and pass it on to others? You have to buy a new copy of *DC Utilities* for each computer you use? Fortunately, I have packed my compilers at home with *PACKer* before installing them in my office—if I did this with *DC Squish*, I would not sleep at night, waiting for a friendly FBI agent to knock at 3 a.m. on my door.

Gentlemen, think again! When you compile a program, it contains much more copyrighted code (compiler libraries) than your loader, and virtually no compiler vendor requires any licence fees for distribution of the executables (those who did are no longer on the market). The next thing along your line will be a disk formatter with a clause against distributing disks formatted with it!

### The Decision Is Up to You

Should you run to your dealer and buy *DC Utilities*? This depends, and I hope my review can help you in making the right decision. Some people I know say it is one of the best buys of the year, some say do not bother (or worse).

In spite of the criticism above, I find the \$26 expense quite justified, first of all because of the *DC Squish*. Besides, the package is quite inexpensive (remember those \$30 RAMdisks and disk caches from two years ago?) and, let me stress again, performs as advertised. Even if I have not found much use for some of its programs, your working patterns and needs may be different.

What also is important is that it is difficult not to notice that the workmanship of these programmers is high-class. They seem to know the ST in and out and I hope the ST market will see more results of their work.  
*DC Utilities: Double Click Software, P.O.Box 741206, Houston, TX 77274; (713)645-3759*

### Dan Wilga Strikes Again

If you have *NeoDesk 2.05* (and if you don't, something is definitely wrong), you may be not aware of quite an array of goodies inside that program, which sit dormant there, waiting for *NeoDesk* companion programs to be released.

Just before Christmas I received the pre-release version of the *NeoDesk Toolkit* and some other goodies from Gribniff Software.

*NeoDesk* can communicate with properly written desktop accessories, which can use many of its routines (for example, all its quite sophisticated disk operations). This means that the accessories may contain much less code than they would need otherwise. (The accessories have to be written in C, although there is a way to bypass this limitation).

The first utilities using this protocol, are a command shell (again? this one, at least, seems to work!) and a recoverable trash can. Yes, you will be able to un-delete a deleted file.

I hope to write more about these products in the March issue. They look *very* promising, and—in the beta version—cleaner than many programs in their distribution stage.

### Opinions, Opinions...

If we talk reviews and beta stage, let me make one thing clear. Like many writers, I follow the rule of *not* presenting my negative remarks to the program authors and distributors before the review is published, if it refers to a product already being distributed (read: sold to customers hoping for something better). On the other hand, such a communication makes a lot of sense while the program is under development, i.e. *before* anybody buys it. In such a case the reviewer bases his opinion on the *marketed* version of the product. I believe this approach is in the best interest of the readers, who depend, to a smaller or larger degree, on the reviewer's opinions.

One can imagine exceptions from this rule, but these are very embarrassing situations—both for the writer and for the program author.

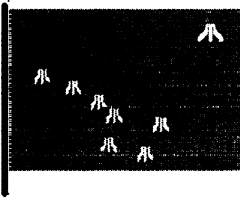
If you read this column regularly, you may guess I am referring to my negative evaluation of *ACCEss* in the November issue, and to an answer from Mr. Douglas Hodson, the program's publisher, in December's *Letters to the Editor*.

Without getting into details (remember what I said about the risk of engaging into lengthy exchanges?), and after the re-reading of both my review and the letter, I feel I have to tax your patience by making the two following points:

- I stick to my opinions expressed in the review (this also includes the technicalities);
- I am glad that Mr. Hodson (I enjoyed meeting him at the Fest. too) is not taking it personally. .

One of the first programs I reviewed for the *Current Notes* back in 1987 was *Prospero Pascal v.1*. The review contained quite a lot of *very* critical remarks. Version 2 of *Prospero Pascal* is now my favorite language on the ST. Let me hope the same thing will happen to all the programs I have the privilege of criticizing on these pages.





# Atari 8-Bit Systems: Alive and Well in Alaska

by Stephen LaFevers



I use computers a lot. I'm a writer and educator in Alaska and have used many computers—Apple, IBM, Vector Graphic, Kaypro, Commodore, Macintosh. That's why, when I have a choice, I use an Atari. If you don't understand that statement, you've never used another brand of computer.

The computer I use most is an Atari 130XE. What do I do with it? Glad you asked. For one thing, I write. I have written five books on it (it's great for word processing). I have used *Atariwriter Plus* and *Typesetter* to put out a statewide newsletter, and I've produced many overhead transparencies as well as several video training tapes with Atari 8-bit systems.

The great graphics and sound capabilities of the 8-bit are terrific for video tape production. First, you tape the live action; then, with another recorder tied into the Atari monitor jack, you blend in the sound and graphics. There are a number of public domain and several commercially available programs that are excellent for adding audiovisuals to tape.

*Advanced Music System* and *Music Studio* are terrific for adding music. Between *Movie Maker*, *Mes-sage Display*, *Mad Scientist Bulletin Board*, *Atari Touch Tablet*, *Typesetter*, and a few simple type-in programs, you can put anything you can imagine on the screen and onto video tape. And it's relatively easy to produce all kinds of specialized sound effects.

Oh, I know you cannot get the quality of picture from an 8-bit that you can from an ST, but that's irrelevant because a television set is incapable of reproducing that kind of quality. With an 8-bit, however,

what you see is what you get. The TV can reproduce it perfectly from tape. And, unless you are a MIDI nut, and I'm not, you can get considerably better sound from an 8-bit than you can from an ST. (If you are a MIDI nut, there are MIDI interfaces for the XL/XE computers.)

I have also used my XE to create course outlines, test question data banks and printouts, a video tape catalog and a listing data bank for more than 1,000 titles, and innumerable other applications that require a good computer like my Atari.

Some people have been complaining that more new software has been coming out for the ST than for 8-bit computers. I feel, however, that this is due, in part, to the fact that there is already far more 8-bit stuff on the market. The ST is only trying to catch up. It's also true that a lot of older software for the 8-bit is disappearing, but that is to be expected, since what is vanishing isn't good enough to compete. There is a lot of good stuff out there for our machines and more is coming all the time.

The local Atari store in Fairbanks, Alaska [Far North Computers, 59 College Rd., #217, Fairbanks, AK. 99701—Ph. (907) 456-3700—if you're interested], for example, has more than 150 titles available on cartridge alone! They include word processors, databases, paint programs, science applications, languages, alternative DOS carts, a graphic operating environment like the ST uses, educational titles, and, of course, games. When you add to that the hundreds of titles in stock on disk, the mind is boggled! Walk into an Amiga dealership sometime and see what's in stock.

This store has eleven different word processing programs in stock for the 8-bit! By my last count that's more than are available for the ST. There's a word processor that is designed to include graphics and works something like a desktop publishing program, (a similar program, *Word Up*, has recently hit the ST market). There's another that has integrated a word processor with a database and terminal program; there's no equivalent for the ST. One lets you work on two documents at once with windows; another has a spell checker that inserts the correct spelling without you having to retype it; the list goes on and on.

And the variety doesn't stop with word processors. There are databases ranging from simple enough for a child, to complex enough to rival anything put out for IBM-PCs. There are spread sheets, professional and home accounting packages, tax programs, graphing programs, print utilities, and scores of educational programs for everyone from preschoolers to college graduates and trade school students. There are four different desktop publishing programs, not counting things like *Award Ware*, *Printshop*, and the stuff for little kids. And of course there are a zillion games.

Many of the newer games play as well on the 8-bit as their equivalents do on the ST, and the graphics are outstanding. There are arcades, puzzles, mazes, adventures, board games, card games, racing games, talking games, musical games, educational games and games that work with the light gun—something you cannot get for the ST.

All of these 8-bit programs are in stock at our local Atari store. You can walk in and buy them off the shelf. And if you don't find what you are looking for in the store, it can probably be ordered for you. There are far more titles (and peripherals) available locally for Atari 8-bits than there are for Apple or Commodore 8-bits, or even 16-bit machines. As a matter of fact, the only other computer in town that has anywhere near the variety of software and hardware available locally is the ST.

And the 8-bit is unsurpassed in educational applications, even by Apple who made its name in education. The Fairbanks store must have 50 educational 8-bit titles in stock and scores more available by special order. Compare that to how many—20 or 30 for the ST?

Now I've heard that some people believe Atari is not supporting the 8-bit line, and I can see why people could think that. After all, Atari didn't come out with a laser printer for the 8-bit, or a hard drive. (But there are lasers and hard drives that will work with the 8-bit. I have an HP DeskJet for laser quality print on the 8-bit, and it works just fine. My wife is writing her master's thesis on it right now.) Remember, Atari is playing catch up with the ST, so it stands to reason there will be more new products there. Also, since the 8-bit line is so well established, they can afford to let it slide while they concentrate on the ST.

Remember also, however, that Atari has recently come out with a double-sided, double-density DOS for the 8-bit to go with the new DS/DD drive. Atari has an excellent letter quality printer for the 8-bit, not for the ST, and their dot matrix printer isn't bad. Other recent introductions include the 80 column/interface, light gun, a 1200 baud modem (so it works on the ST too—I'm not picky), and bank-switchable cartridges that allow up to 256K of programming. Dozens of

new cartridges have been introduced, and dozens more are under development both at Atari and other companies.

Everything imaginable within the capabilities of these machines has already been done, right? Not so, Virginia. Third party developers are still coming up with new products. With ten years of product development already behind the 8-bits, that can't be easy. It is true that we already have stuff like digital scan-

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The next time  
someone moans about  
the Atari 8-bit, just think  
of the poor sap who  
bought a Vic-20,  
Commodore Plus 4, Pet,  
Osborne, Timex Sinclair,  
TI-99, Adam, Apple  
Lisa, IBM PC-Junior,  
Intellivision, or COCO.

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ners, video digitizers, audio digitizers, MIDI interfaces, color printers, light pens, drafting tablets, RAM upgrades to 1040K and the like, but there are new things still to come. New types of software designed for the new graphic operating environments, 16-bit chips to speed operations, more 80-column application software, and, of course, a lot more new generation, big memory, high resolution games are coming down the pike.

Atari doesn't have to worry about the 8-bits competing with STs because the 8-bits fill a gap in the ST market: the family with small children. Only the 8-bit will satisfy this market because only the 8-bit line has the computers, software, and peripherals to fulfill the needs of parents and children alike—and it's inexpensive enough that parents

aren't afraid to let the kids play with it.

The next time someone moans about the Atari 8-bit, just think of the poor sap who bought a Vic-20, Commodore Plus 4, Pet, Osborne, Timex Sinclair, TI-99, Adam, Apple Lisa, IBM PC-Junior, Intellivision, or COCO. When was the last time something new came out for one of those machines? Think about the predicament of the orphaned Commodore 64 owners who have 3.5 inch drives while the available software is on 5.25 inch disks. Remember the MacIntosh 128/512 and Apple I/II owners you never hear about who are being abandoned by Apple. And while you're at it, light a candle for the CP/M owners who once had THE MACHINE, but have fallen from grace, and the IBM compatible people who have not been IBM compatible since PS/2 came out. True, they're fighting hard to stay alive, but so is PS/2, and somebody is going to lose. Remember also that most of those machines will never be upgraded to perform all the functions that your 8-bit could when you opened the box.

I have been computing on Atari equipment since Nolan Bushnell came out with the 2600 back in the 1970s. Most people don't know it, but there was a Basic cartridge for the 2600 that would let you write simple programs and produce music and graphics on your TV set. Atari still supports that machine, although less vigorously than the newer ones, and the same is true of the 8-bit computers.

Don't worry. Be happy. Atari is still selling product for every machine they've ever made, something no other manufacturer can say. If you support your machine, so will the market place. Buy what's out there, discourage pirating, and developers will continue providing product.

Stephen LaFevers, 940 Clear, North Pole, Alaska 99705.

# And The Winner Was....

## Lynx & Game Boy--Mano a Mano

by Frank F. Sommers

### Happy vs Unhappy

A subgroup of Freudian analysts maintains that easily born, easily brought-into-the-world babies are usually of pleasing dispositions. Should that unlikely fact be true then my Lynx is destined for deep depression throughout its existence wherever it may be.

Federal Express arrived with the package as I was going out the door for the airport. So what's being late for a plane when your handheld, color monitor, computer game machine has arrived. Particularly if you know that the Xmas market will see but a few of this endangered species. The bags went down, the boxes were "field striped," vital contents shoved into a carry-on bag, a set of six AA batteries was snatched from a drawer and we roared off to the airport and a cross-continent hop to "Cool City" in California.

### An Agonizing Beginning

How long after boarding did it take to have the Lynx up and surfing away in *California Games*? Would you believe somewhere over Denver, about two hours short of San Francisco? Why? Well, when the 2nd officer on the plane doesn't have a screw driver, and the set of snatched batteries was dead, and the sixth remained stuck in the battery channel, and you had to wait for lunch to bend your spoon and open up the back, and *California Games* was DOA.... Well, that's a lot of frustration to wash away and have you start enjoying the device in your hand.

You ask yourself, "Can I comment on this product without prejudice?", and the answer is yes, about as unbiased as a juror listening to a drug pusher who incidentally had also shot the juror's sister.

After discarding the one game that comes with the Lynx, getting a new set of batteries installed, and putting in *Blue Lightening*, one of the three other games in existence for Atari's new piece of hardware, I

automatic landing and the next level of attack and dog fight or strafe.

With that we pushed open the back of a machine, that is about a foot long and four inches wide and two inches thick. Gingerly we pulled out the *Blue Lightening* game card and pressing down firmly pushed in an arcade labyrinth-type game, heralded as *Electrocop*. Here, in a space ship environment, the hero dashes around shooting various shaped androids, as he moves from cabin to cabin, and level to level searching for none other than the president's daughter. The figures are distinct if not bright and sharp and the action at 16 MHz is smooth. But after 15-20 minutes you have a taste of *deja-vu* which made you wish you were back at your big set playing *Barbarian*.

A quick change of cards. *Gates of Zendocon*, the last of the four games is installed. It's a *Goldrunner* type arcader. After a few minutes of scrolling and blasting away, you find the captain's announcement that S.F. is just ahead and to please buckle up, not necessarily and unwanted interruption.

So far what's the best thing you can say about baby Lynx? Well, probably the interest the guy in the seat across the aisle displayed when he asked you how much it cost and who made it.

### Third Party View

An extended weekend later and you are back home, with probably another hour logged on the machine for a total of three. You're wondering why you were still put off by the nature of play of the games. By contrast, a lawyer son in "Cool City"



settled down to play, while others watched the movie. In the darkened cabin, the pastels on the screen, though by no means as bright as your ST were still easy to see. What wasn't as pleasing was the wooden action of flying the fighter bomber across the screen, mechanistically shooting and strafing until your thumb began to stiffen and you mercifully were brought into an

who started his computer game playing on a mainframe at Dartmouth a decade ago and who still enjoys them spent an hour with *Blue Lightening* and would have gladly doubled that had events permitted.

Thus you sense that another session is mandatory before reaching any final conclusions. Also a call has been made to B.N. Genius, the speedy mail order company that had received 150 of these machines from Atari to meet all their Xmas demands, and who had back orders for 146 before the overdue shipment arrived, requesting a replacement for the inoperative *California Games* card.

After about twenty minutes, a challenge of sorts emerged from the flying game. Could you get to the next level, learn the code word for that level, so that you could start there rather than from the tedious time consuming beginning. We even engaged in a little unsuccessful "code cracking," since only four letters were involved, typing in possible variations, extrapolating from the two known code words for the first two levels, "Plan" and "Alfa."

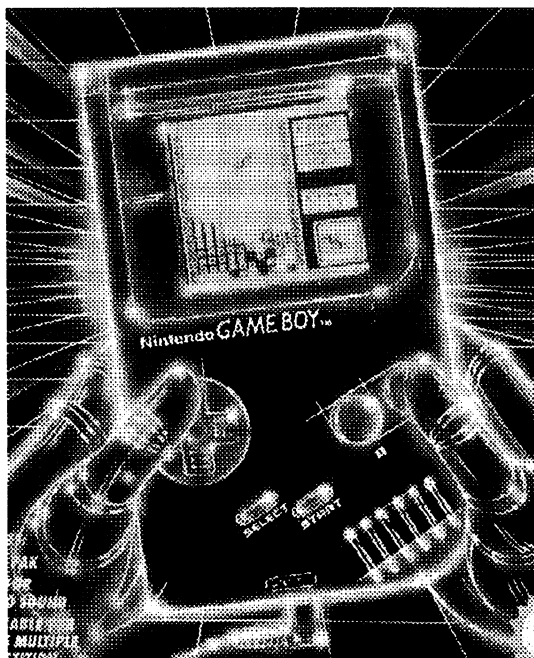
Then as we started the series from the beginning, everything went black. And black it stayed. New batteries, wall-plug adaptor, nothing made any difference. So what had begun in frustration, ended after some four-plus hours of "hands-on-experience" the same way. Complete frustration. The credit-card sized game cartridges went back into their boxes. So did the Lynx. And with a sense of lightness we left the return package at the post office and went with a renewed smile on our face, happily on our way. Who knows who has that little Lynx baby now.

## And in the Other Corner

At Xmas time, Nintendo had succeeded in getting the last of their

1,000,000 plus Game Boys into toy stores all over America. They had gotten such a tight hold on the computer game market that special interest groups finally pushed the U.S. Congress into setting a date for hearings to see if "monopolistic magic" was being practiced. Read, "Marketing magic—Saturday morning TV advertising to the max!"

And when the two contenders "weigh in," how do they compare? About half the cost for the machine, half the cost for the game cartridges, and two-thirds as big and heavy. Game Boy, that is. Lynx retails for \$199.95 and Game Boy \$99.95. Lynx Games are \$39.95 and the Boy's \$19.95.



## Getting Started

The Game Boy almost starts itself. Four AA batteries, and flick the switch and there it is. There what is?

Any comparison of the two machines inevitably gets back to the question of marketing. A device is successful if it sells. To sell it has to appear on store shelves. By that standard, Game Boy will be 10 times more successful than Lynx—100,000 versus 1,200,000 sold over the holidays. Appeal? The game that comes with Game Boy is *Tetris*, the

international favorite, that addicts one 'til dawn. Even when *California Games* works it cannot be called "addicting."

But things begin to level out when you discover that most stores have only a couple of other games for Game Boy, e.g. *Super Mario Land* and a tennis simulation. The difference in speed, Lynx being approximately four times faster, doesn't show up on the screen as such, probably because *Tetris* by its nature has a jerky motion even on the Mega ST and *Mario* is a simple jump-and-run game. The controls on both machines are easy to operate, both with a four-way rocker pad and A & B buttons. Lynx also has a restart and pause switch and a rotate screen toggle so you can play it either right or left handed. Both have connector cables for multiple player action, optional adapters for either wall or car cigarette lighter plugs. And *Lynx* has a headphone socket, so the sound won't disturb the person in the seat or the pillow beside you.

## Conclusions-Predictions

The Lynx wins hands down on the ease of screen viewing. In the dark it is easily played and enjoyed. The Game Boy can't really be seen in the dark, even though both machines have brightness controls. Thus there is some eye strain which detracts from your involvement with the device. As more games come on the market the wooden nature of the current games for the Lynx will dissipate and likely not every player will react to the current crop the same way this reviewer did. So....if Atari can increase production, and if Atari will advertise the Lynx, they have a product that could indeed sell far better than Game Boy.

So....considering all the "if's," by the end of this year, we predict Nintendo will continue to outsell Atari 10 to 1.



# Hard Disk Myths & Mysteries

## Part 4: Build It Yourself

by David C. Troy (c) 1989

I have just finished a four day marathon writing spree, completing a forty-odd page manual for our hard disk products, so I am simultaneously primed for and tired of writing about hard disks. But, I promised I would finish up our three part series, and this being the fourth part, I think it's about time. I said I would tie up any loose ends. Well, I was right. There are several loose ends, plus some cool questions from interested readers which I would like to address. And, a *surprise!*

### Interleave

What is interleave? You've probably heard about it, and if you haven't, you will, and will wonder what the heck it is. Here's the deal. On a disk, you have circular tracks. Tracks are divided into sectors (arcs of the circle). In a perfect world, sectors would be laid out just like the numbers on a clock, and the computer could read data quickly enough to read one sector after another as the disk spins at 3600 rpms. This scenario is what is referred to as 1:1 interleave, where consecutively numbered sectors are laid out contiguously in a track.

Enter: Slow IBMs. Because many machines (particularly PC XTs) *can't* transfer data quickly enough, a new scheme was created. The reason was, if sectors were contiguously arranged, as the slow computer read the first sector, by the time it got done thinking about it and was ready to read another sector, the second sector had already gone by and a near complete revolution was required to get to that second sector again. So, why not move the second sector a little further from the first one? This way, after the computer read the first sector, and it thought about it,

the second sector would be right where the head was. How handy. In between the first two consecutively numbered sectors, you put another sector (like the 14th one for example) which makes sense based on the speed of the disk. This situation is 2:1 interleave, where you have one sector between two consecutively numbered sectors. You can put as many sectors as you want between consecutively numbered sectors, and the ratio increases accordingly.

The ST is capable of handling 1:1 interleave. The place that you've probably heard interleave come up is with Seagate 296N (and 277N, too, I believe) drives, which are hardwired (in ROM) to do a 2:1 interleave. This is specifically for the accommodation of slow PCs. You'd think, "Gosh, if that drive only does 2:1 interleave, then why should I use it on my ST if it can do 1:1?" Well, the answer is that the ST can do 2:1 quite handily, and you still get a *very fast* approximate 500K per second transfer rate. That's all I want to say about interleave. Questions? Call me.

### Backing Up

People ask me, "Dave, what do you do about backing up?" Not a great deal is what I usually tell them. Maybe I'm a rebel, but I don't have too much to lose. Hard drive backup is *not* a compulsory task dictated by gods or laws. The amount to which you backup your hard drive should directly reflect your fear of losing what's on it. I don't have anything too earth shattering on my hard disk drive. The only stuff that I consider worthy of backup are things that I write or obtain over a modem. I mean heck, where did the other stuff come from? The stork? I don't think so. It came from my floppy

collection. My floppy collection is a big pile of backups. So, if you have a 500 page document or piece of source code that is your life's work, then *that* is worth backing up, many times, for that matter.

Image backups and large hierarchical file backups are OK if you have a delicate ecological structure to your hard drive, with layers upon layers of artfully juxtaposed folders. Image backups are great for alternate operating systems. But my personal hard drive resembles more of an ST-only heap. That's just me though. If you must image backup, the removable cartridge hard drives (available from *certain* companies) and the tape backups are definitely the way to go. For file backup Turtle and a heap of floppies works great. And for backing up just your treasured creations and downloaded graphics demos, about four floppies usually do the trick for me.

### Viewer Mail

I received a few questions from our readers, and I thought I would try to answer them, as best I could, or at least reassure you that they were unanswerable. First off, someone wanted to know how the busy light works. The answer is, no one knows for sure. I tried to get schematics from a couple of manufacturers and they wouldn't budge. There are a lot of things that can make the busy light blink: a read, a write, an ID request—the list goes on.

Someone wanted to know why the access time of some drives goes down after several hours of use. I have heard this to be true, but have empirically observed this phenomenon very rarely. I suspect it is just because heat buildup in the drive itself causes minute swelling

and thus more resistance. I don't know. Just a guess. If you have noticed this though, I would not worry about it. It's just the way the hard drive works.

Should you park the heads on an autoparking drive or not? The official answer from one manufacturer (Seagate) is no, and that it can cause damage. I have done this before and not suffered any adverse effects, but why do it? If the drive is autoparking, there is no need to park it. So if you're wondering if you should, don't.

Clay Miller of Idaho Falls, Idaho wants to know how to hook a second drive up to his Supra 20 Megabyte drive. "To add another drive, it looks like I need a case, power supply, 25 pin to 50 pin external cable, a 50 pin to 50 pin internal cable, embedded controller SCSI drive and power. Is this right?" Yes it is. Just set that up, (according to my instructions in last month's "Build It Yourself" column) and you're essentially ready to go. But, SCSI addresses become an issue here. In fact, let me expound on that subject a second.

Any device which uses the DMA port on the ST must have a unique SCSI address (0-7). Most hard drives use SCSI 0. The Atari Laser Printer uses 7, and sometimes 5. The clock in the ICD host adapter uses SCSI 6. If you add a second hard drive (with a separate controller) you must give it a unique SCSI address, like 1 (not 0, or 6 if you have an ICD host adapter). You just put a jumper on that new drive, and it will be SCSI 1 like magic.

There is another parameter, called LUN (for logical unit number) which has been baffling multitudes of unsuspecting hard drive users. LUN is a distinction which has no meaning when talking about SCSI drives. LUN is used to differentiate between different ST506/412 drives which are hooked up to one controller. For instance, most controllers can handle two drives. To tell the difference, one is set as LUN 0 and the other is set as LUN 1. SCSI

drives with embedded controllers each have their own personal controller, which can't run a slave drive. Therefore, they are always LUN 0.

Those are the questions I received which I deem swell enough to answer.

### Birth of a Feature

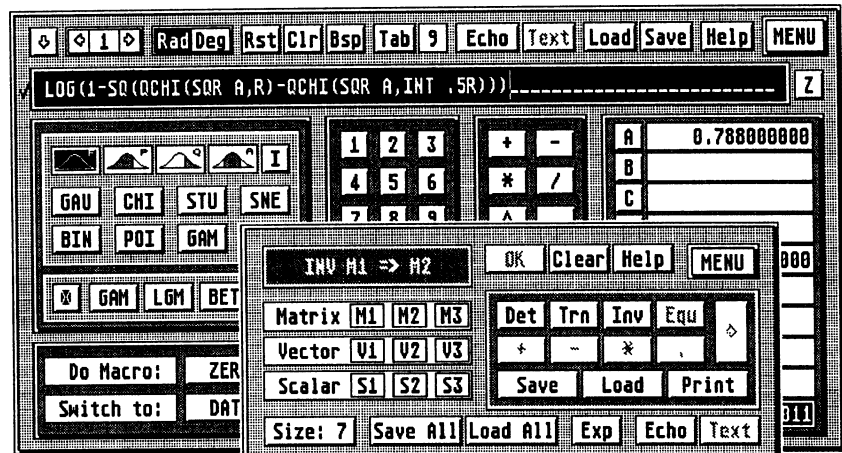
I think we've pretty much exhausted the whole hard drive subject, so it's time to move on to something else. So, starting next month, (actually in October, if you include this series) my column will be entitled Myths & Mysteries (sound OK to you Joe?) and it will be a general interest feature with questions and answers from concerned readers. We will cover the whole range of ST hardware and software. I will try to answer as many questions as I can per month, and throw in a couple of interesting

stories and tidbits. I don't claim to be a great oracle or anything, but being an Atari dealer, I do know the answers to many questions, and for those I don't know, it will definitely do me good to do the research. And you, the readers will have the benefit of my research. So, really it's an open forum for the opening and widening of ST knowledge.

If you have a question you would like answered (the chances are high—I only got three responses from my last plea for questions), please send it to me one of the following ways: the mail (best way) David Troy, 556 Baltimore Annapolis Blvd., Severna Park, MD 21146, GENIE: Toad-Serv., or CompuServe: 72470,1605. So, that's the deal. I look forward to it.

Next month: how to get stuff from an 8-bit Atari to the ST—and vice versa!

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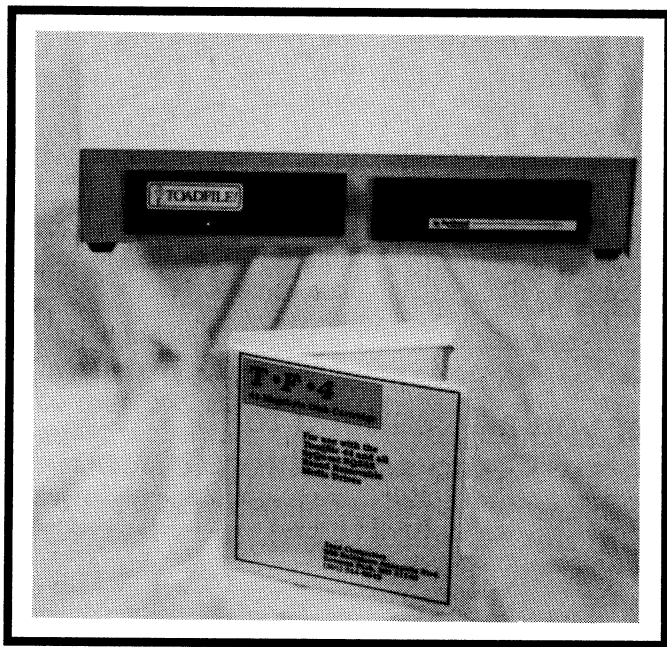
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# -- The G-Man --

## "...as seen on TV!"

---

**by David G. Grace**  
**U.S. Special Agent**

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As we begin a new year, a new decade, we wonder what it will bring, good times or bad. The Atari community also wonders what the year will provide: new hardware or software, upgrades or revisions, new technology or rehashed ideas. One thing is almost certain. This author is more likely to appear on prime time television than Atari computers. Believe it or not, I really would prefer to see an Atari there. Ataris excite me. The programs for the ST are visually and audibly stunning. The 8 bits really are "Power without the price." I'm a stockholder in the company. My only writing (outside of law enforcement reports) is for Atari publications. I want the company to succeed. I think it can succeed. I think it could be the biggest selling computer in America, not just Europe. I want to have a computer at home that's compatible with the one at work. I WANT TO BUY AN ST!

I'm sorry. I guess I got a little carried away. But sometimes the frustration point is easy to reach. Sometimes those who want Atari to succeed can't help but wonder why it doesn't. Like a ball team, one looks to the top when the team has the players, but still doesn't win. One looks to the managers and owners. My ego will enjoy being on the tube this winter, but I'd rather be watching a station break with a Fuji symbol.

### Equal Justice for G-Man

In case anyone out there will settle for seeing ME in prime time, you can do so in a TV movie on the ABC network called "Equal Justice." It's a pilot for a new series which is

to begin running during the winter months. The pilot will probably be shown in January. I'm a glorified extra, appearing in several scenes which have little or nothing to do with the plot. The extent of my performance will be determined by the film editors. My only plot-related scene comes in the last fifteen minutes. There, in a District Attorney's law library and in the space of a few minutes, I drink booze, get hit with a blow up doll, sing with Gene Pitney, and otherwise have a grand old time at a poker game. At one point, I sit on the arm of a chair (vacated by the blow up doll) next to one of the stars, Barry Miller, and drink whiskey out of a white mug. For that I got paid. What a country! Of course, if you aren't interested in seeing me, and why should you, you can watch "Rosanne" or something. Oh, in case you were wondering, "Equal Justice" is similar in style to "LA Law" but is focused on a District Attorney's office instead of a private law firm. No, they haven't contacted me about doing the series. I predict that Atari will not be one of the sponsors.

### Looking Back

I remember when we were inundated with Atari commercials. The Atari 2600 game machine was a national craze. Everybody had to have *Space Invaders*. Lines formed in front of the PacMan machine. Atari computer clubs were looking for bigger places to hold their meetings. Atari magazines were springing up monthly. The ST created a new surge of interest, debate and even more magazines. *Compute* magazine gave as much space to Atari as

it did Apple or IBM. *Softside* magazine had the disk or tape editions to save you hours of typing in, and there I tried my first text adventure, and I was hooked. I always carried the latest magazine in my G-Car. I would read it through every lunch hour, sitting outside courtrooms or on surveillance when it wasn't my turn to watch. When the kids were in bed and Whatshername was watching the upstairs TV, I'd pull the end table over in front of the one in the family room. While lamenting my lack of one of those expensive computer desks, I'd hook up the wires, plug in the joy stick and boot up a cartridge of *Star Raiders* or a tape on the 410. I bought the Microprose flight simulation, *Spitfire Ace*, and I was hooked. I bought a disk drive and two more microprose programs, *F-15 Strike Eagle* and *Kennedy Approach*. When that radio voice came through the TV, followed by the realistic static burst and when I flew in low over Libya, dodged the SAMs, dropped my bombs, pulled back hard on the stick, punched the afterburners on and headed home with a barrel roll at supersonic speed...DAMN! I was hooked! Was it so long ago?

I've graduated to the 130 XE, multiple disk drives, Star NLQ printer, a modem. I write with my *Atari-writer+* downstairs, while my daughter does the same in her own room on the old 400, upgraded to 48K with a full-stroke keyboard. An 800 I bought for \$15.00 (not including the power transformer) rounds out my trilogy of 8 bits. Not one has needed a penny's repair in the past eight years, despite spilled drinks, dust and occasional dropping. With

the word processor came a new hobby, writing. Writing about computers, especially Atari computers, and preferably with a touch of humor along the way. But what will tomorrow bring?

## Looking Forward

To put it nicely, I don't believe in psychics; you know, the seers who make predictions or tell you where you left Aunt Martha's missing pin. I've been a Fed for over eighteen years and I have yet to see a psychic provide anything, short of comedy relief, to an investigation. I am happy to say that, to my knowledge, they are not used by any Federal enforcement agency. Fortune tellers, card readers and astrologers are con men (or women). Although I don't always agree with Carl Sagan's politics, I do agree that (despite the effect of the moon on the tides of Earth) the doctor who delivered you had more effect on you, due to distance and relative size, than did some vaporous nebulae in the Orion constellation. Nor do I believe that I, and one out of every twelve others in the world with my Zodiac sign (including some Aborigine from the Outback), can really expect "...a financial or business matter is to be settled to your advantage today, due to the influence of a stranger who is a Scorpio."

Having established my view of predictors, I would now like to make some predictions. I never said it wasn't possible to be accurate, I just don't like those who claim they have some extraordinary power to do so, particularly those who charge for their services. I have no special powers, have never tried this before, and my service is provided free in this fine publication. It remains to be seen if I'm accurate. If I am, it's based strictly on an examination of history and the application of deductive reasoning and logic. The dates provided are, of course, approximate ones. Even logic requires SOME guesswork. In any case, let's look at the year 1990 as I

see it from here. And remember, you heard it here first!

## Atari 1990 Highlights

**January 1:** Shortly after midnight, at a New Years Eve party and with drink in hand, Jack Tramiel begins his annual "Business is War" speech. This has been a family tradition since his days as the owner of the Commodore computer company.

**January 15:** Sam Tramiel, in an exclusive interview with *Antic* magazine, predicts that the 1990s will be the decade of the Atari.

**January 30:** The Editor of *Current Notes* receives a letter protesting the G-Man's use of KGB and CIA men as a vehicle for humor, suggesting that it could affect the success of the next Bush-Gorbachev summit meeting.

**February 15:** Atari announces the development of a new hardware product, the STX computer. The new unit is said to run not only its own software, but also IBM, Macintosh, Apple II, and Amiga programs, without the need for additional hardware or software purchased from David Small.

**February 27:** BBS communications begin rumors which suggest that the new STX does not run the existing 8 bit or ST software. Included in the ROM chips is a special routine that will prevent Darek Mihocka from making a translation program. This is added by Atari as "...a service to our users because, after all, why would they want to run cruddy old software they already own?"

**March 7:** I call my broker to make sure my account is still active and to warn him to prepare to sell.

**March 25:** At a CES show, Atari wows them with its new product line, including the STE, a 20 megabyte RAM laptop with MIDI interface, built in disk and hard drives, 90,000 possible colors (over 1000 on screen at any given time), and voice synthesizer.

**April 1:** *Current Notes* prints a G-Man April Fool article about the use of computer databases in Heaven, including a remote terminal located at the Pearly Gates for efficient entry control.

**April 12:** Atari, in an exclusive

interview with *Analog Magazine*, announces the release of TOS version 43.211, which corrects all the bugs found in the three hundred previous versions.

**April 20:** *Current Notes* receives the first letter protesting the G-Man's insulting treatment of psychics and other gifted people who have powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men.

**May 1:** BBS systems around the country begin providing a new public domain utility program for down loading. It can be used to remove the new bugs found in TOS version 43.211.

**May 25:** The first Atari 8-bit program of the year is released...in England.

**June 17:** Letters of complaint begin to arrive at *Current Notes*, protesting the April Fool article on computers in Heaven. It will be noted that someone of a Judeo-Christian background could find it disturbing that one's entry into the Hereafter might require a delay for the selection of a joystick position and the pressing of the fire button.

**July 8:** Atari reveals that the release of the STX and STE machines may be delayed by (pick one) A) a computer chip shortage, B) slow action by the FCC, C) software pirates, or D) the conjunction of Venus and Saturn.

**August 4:** Sam Tramiel, in an exclusive interview with *Watchtower* magazine, announces that the STX and STE line is expected to be available in time for Christmas. In addition, the release will be made simultaneously with the beginning of a new prime time TV ad campaign, with print media support, featuring a well known star who will represent the company.

**August 20:** Whatshername asks when I'm going sell that Atari stock.

**August 29:** Atari stock rises to my absolute break even point (the cost of the stock plus broker commissions, interest lost and interest expenses paid). Whatshername insists that it will be my decision alone as to whether to sell that stock. However, I best not forget that I'll have to live with the consequences for the rest of my life, or until I hit the millionaire lottery, whichever comes

first.

**August 30:** I sell.

**August 31:** Atari stock rises three full points.

**September 15:** Atari announces that its new TV ad campaign will kick off during a prime time special. The star who is to represent the company in the commercials continues to be a secret, but Leonard Tramiel lets it slip that it's the head of a household on a popular TV situation comedy.

**September 20:** Jeanne Dixon predicts that the Atari ads will feature Bill Cosby, or maybe Elvis.

**September 26:** Atari stock reaches its highest point since it went public. There is talk of a three for one split.

**October 2:** The ST, following a redesign, is released. It doesn't do

anything new, but it now sports pastel colored function buttons and a built-in ROM version of PacMan (the Atari 2600 version).

**October 15:** Apple reveals its new hardware line during a TV ad blitz throughout the World Series.

**November 23:** IBM reveals its new hardware during the Thanksgiving Day football games.

**December 7:** [a date which will live in infamy] The new Atari ads hit prime time television. The company is represented by Rosanne Barr. The debut of the ads occurs throughout the Pee Wee Herman Christmas Special. The ads feature the Atari 2600 game machine.

**December 10:** Atari stock drops five points.

**December 26:** On Page 206 of

the TV Guide (just opposite the horoscope) appears Rosanne Barr holding an Atari 2600 and saying "Here's my recommendation for a memorable Christmas. See if you can stop the Space Invaders!" A red banner crosses the advertisement diagonally through one corner. The banner says, "As seen on TV!"

**December 31:** Jack Tramiel, shortly before midnight at a New Years Eve party, gives his annual "Business is War" speech. He stuns the guests by admitting that he never sold his interest in Commodore. He adds that sometimes infiltration beats an overt attack!

**January 2, 1991:** Commodore stock plunges five points.

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	59392	
✕ AUTHORDP.DTP	06-12-89 03:49 pm	
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A:DINVOCDTP	4180 09-24-89 12:42 pm	
A:DLETR.DTP	3580 09-24-89 12:43 pm	
ENGLAND.DTP	15616 09-24-89 12:41 pm	
FRANCE.DTP	15582 09-24-89 12:41 pm	
HOLLAND.DTP	15506 09-24-89 12:41 pm	
✓ INV:AUST.DTP	4010 09-24-89 12:41 pm	
✓ INV:CAND.DTP	4202 09-24-89 12:41 pm	
UIS:AD.DTP	66414 09-24-89 12:40 pm	
UIS:IIAD.DTP	26220 09-24-89 12:40 pm	
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## CN Now ONLINE

Visit Us on GENie  
by John Barnes

In collaboration with the folks at the General Electric Network for Information Exchange (GENie) *Current Notes* has established an electronic bulletin board for matters about Current Notes. **Category 15** of the Bulletin Board area of the Atari ST roundtable on GENie has been set aside as **"Current Notes Online."**

We took this step to increase our visibility and so that some of our current subscribers all over the US and Canada could use their modems to get in touch with us. Of course, the ST roundtable is not operated as a charitable institution and the folks at GENie hope that our presence will enhance the demand for their service. Everyone will benefit if we can generate lively discussions and post lots of files for folks to download.

The list of files posted to date includes a handbook for *Current Notes* subscribers (CNFACTS1.ARC, File number 13150) that gives our subscription rates, notes for contributors, a list of the files in our disk library, and a list of dealers who carry our magazine. File number 13130, CNCLUB01.ARC, is a list of *Current Notes Registered Clubs* to help stray Atarians find a user group near them.

We have also posted a few articles with commentary from recent issues. We will also post our cumulative index for 1989. This will give you a convenient way to look up articles from a wide-ranging list of material.

We have started several topics, which are the GENie message threads on particular issues. One topic is devoted to tables of contents for recent issues. People who are not current subscribers may find that they want to get hold of a particular issue after reviewing this index. Another topic is devoted to feedback. Let us know what you like, don't like, and think we ought to cover.

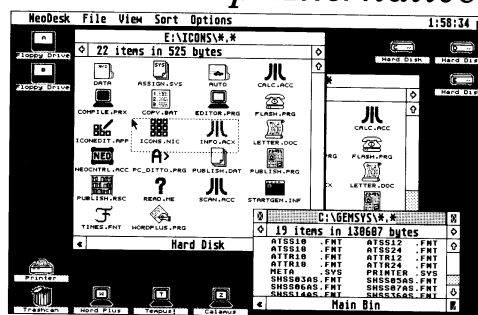
*Current Notes* has a reputation for telling it like it is and we step on more than a few toes in the process. People who feel that their favorite software has been unfairly savaged can get our attention by posting messages in the feedback topic. People who want to enquire about writing for us can send GE-Mail to JOE.WATERS.

*Current Notes* does not intend to become an electronic magazine like STReport or Z\*Mag, so you should not expect to find material that replaces the hardcopy magazine in the online library or the message threads. Discussions of current events in the Atari world are, however, welcome since they may provide us with leads into stories that should be developed further.

In a very real sense *Current Notes* is the leading advocate for the common man in the Atari world. Our magazine is what you, our readers, make it. The new online service is an additional way for you to participate. Enjoy.

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# New Initiatives for Developers

## Atari Cites New Program As Developers Form Own Association with Heads of Six Top Firms As Directors

By John Barnes

In recent months the Atari community has seen two new initiatives aimed at improving the lot of developers. The first, announced at the WAACE AtariFest, was the formation by developers themselves of a new Association. The second, announced at a special party at the Fall Comdex in Las Vegas, came from Atari Corporation and took the form of a new corporate program for developer support.

### Atari Association of Developers

According to a press release dated October 8th 1989 over 40 developers met during the WAACE AtariFest to lay the groundwork for an independent "Atari Association of Developers." The AAD seeks to strengthen the developer support structure already provided by Atari Corporation. "Developer Helping Developer" is their motto.

The temporary board of directors (see box) was given the task of developing a constitution for the AAD, a set of membership guidelines and qualifications, and a set of goals which the association will work to achieve. The complete details can be obtained by downloading file number 12519 entitled AAD.INF from the library in the Atari ST Roundtable on GENie.

AAD is recruiting from all registered Atari developers. The primary communication vehicle appears to be a special private category within the Atari ST Roundtable on the GENie online service.

The tasks that AAD has set for itself include:

- Development and expansion of information which will supplement the published developer's documentation from Atari Corporation to assist developers in creating problem free, efficient, and complete hardware and software products.
- Assistance and support to developers in the marketing, distribution, promotion, and support of developed hardware and software products.
- Assistance to Atari Corporation in the Sales and Marketing of Atari products in concert with developer products.

There are two types of members in the AAD, these are defined as:

- **AAD Developer:** Any developer who is registered with Atari Corporation as a "Registered Developer" and is recognized as such by Atari Corp.
- **AAD Professional Developer:** Any developer who has proven to have created or is creating a viable hardware or software product for the Atari product line, with the intent of

releasing this product into the commercial market. Shareware products may qualify on a case by case basis. Public Domain products do not qualify as commercial products, nor do hardware products which are assembled from other developer's kits or parts.

A member must first qualify as an "AAD Developer" before being considered for "AAD Professional Developer" membership.

All development support provided by the AAD will be provided to all "AAD Developers" in concert with support currently provided by Atari Corp. All "AAD Developers" will have access to development support provided by the AAD.

Support provided specifically to "AAD Professional Developers" will include business related assistance to help commercial developers bring products to market.

The AAD does not expect to act as a clearinghouse for resolving disputes between developers and Atari Corporation or between consumers and developers.

As stated previously, the full text of AAD's first press release is available in a document that can be downloaded from GENie.

### Atari Development Partnerships

The second new initiative comes from Atari Corp itself in an "Atari Development Partner Newsletter" dated December 1989. The initial announcement was made at Comdex, but the newsletter

#### Atari Association of Developers Temporary Board of Directors

Gordon Monnier.....President of Michtron Corp.  
Nathan Potechin ....President of ISD Corp.  
Rich Flashmann .....President of Gribnif Software  
John Eidsvoog .....Partner in Codehead Software  
George Morrison.....President of Alpha Systems  
James Allen.....V-President of Fast Technology



appears to have been mailed to all currently registered developers. Atari regards the new "partnership" between themselves and developers as a new approach to the way they interact with developers. The announcement was signed by Antonio Salerno, VP Applications. Mr Salerno is no longer employed by Atari.

There appear to be six components to this initiative: a complete listing of all registered Atari owners and dealers, a database and software demonstration product named Softsource, a trial subscription program with ST magazines, a new person to handle the program within the corporation, re-registration as an Atari developer under new ground rules, and access to development equipment at a 50 percent discount from retail.

Developers must complete the re-registration procedures in order to participate in this program. The program seems to restrict developer status to people who either are already shipping software products or who expect to ship them in the future. It marks a departure from the previous situation in which one became an Atari developer by simply plunking down the money for a "Developers' Kit" and signing a non-disclosure agreement. Under the new scheme, registration must be renewed annually.

The person whom Atari has hired to implement the new partnership is Charles Cherry, previously the product manager for *Antic*. Charles states that he is where he is because "Atari is finally ready to provide serious help to developers."

Mr. Cherry identifies three critical problems for a developer: Sales, Education, and Visibility.

Mr. Cherry treats sales as a matter of identifying customers for products, hence the effort to provide an Atari Customer mailing list. The list of all registered Atari owners will be available to all Atari Development Partners and it will be updated monthly in a form that allows the developer to construct a database

for making direct mailings to these potential customers.

Education is identified as the problem of helping naive owners to realize the potential of their machines. The vehicle for this will be the free subscription offers to all new Atari computer customers. The magazine publishers will be able to obtain the customer database for use in mailing out three free issues of their magazines to new buyers. The content of these magazines will presumably give these new purchasers a feel for the potential in the "computer appliances" that they have bought.

Registration is a matter that rests with the purchasers of the machines and the offer of free magazine subscriptions will encourage them to register.

The new program encourages developers to enhance their visibility by working through a new tool to be called Atari Softsource, a complete index to all Atari software and hardware products. Developers are to provide disabled copies of software and self-running demonstration programs to be put on CD-ROMs in dealer showrooms and into online libraries. Developers are also to provide three working copies of their products to Atari.

### **What Does It All Mean?**

There is no doubt that Atari has done poorly by its developers in the past. On the surface these new initiatives seem eminently reasonable. Do they really promise a rosy future?

The one thing that developers would like to see more than anything else is an aggressive effort on Atari's part to market its machines. Efforts to market the Portfolio or Lynx products do not count because they are irrelevant to the current people who develop Atari software and hardware.

Add-ons can only be sold if there are enough Atari computers out there to make it worthwhile to develop products for them. In this case, the egg clearly comes ahead

of the chicken. All of the other initiatives are pure empty gestures unless Atari puts its own resources into an all-out effort to put Atari computers into the hands of people who can use them.

Charles Cherry provides a clue to Atari's thinking when he refers to purchasers of "computer appliances." What kind of appliance is it? A vacuum cleaner? A toaster? A dishwasher? The computer-appliance is a piece of wishful thinking on Atari's part. When the Tramiel clan introduced the ST, they made a conscious decision to compete on the basis of price alone. This meant that the monies to support extensive advertising and developer assistance were nowhere to be found.

Unfortunately, this decision has not withstood the test of time. People who have computers in their homes have them because they want to do something useful with them. The millions of copies of MS-DOS software products bear witness to their sophistication. If the computer-appliance resembles anything, it is a Cuisinart, which needs lots of attachments and training to make it perform.

Advice to Atari: Forget about computer-appliances and focus on computers. IBM, Apple, Comodore, Compaq, and a host of other people who know about computers are saturating the market while those who hawk "computer-appliances" (toys, actually) sit on their hands wondering why nobody buys.

The new partnership that Atari has with its developers is like the old one in that there is very little of Atari's money tied up in it. Direct mail, which seems to be the marketing tool that Atari is promoting, costs an enormous amount of money for a very small return. The developers themselves will bear this cost. Mailings to 2,000 new potential customers each month would eat up the profit from an awful lot of software sales. Attempts to reach the entire installed base by direct

mail would bankrupt most Atari developers in a hurry. This is why most developers are content to get their products out for review in magazines and to advertise to audiences that are at least interested enough to buy the magazines.

A little arithmetic is all that is needed to demonstrate that free subscriptions to magazines will not be a big success either. Production and postage costs for mailing three issues of a magazine will eat up anywhere between \$3 and \$8. Multiply this by 24,000 new buyers in the course of a year (a skimpy number, which will do little to enhance Atari's financial prospects) and you come up with between \$72,000 and \$192,000—a huge chunk of the cash flow of any publication.

Atari Softsource is a program whereby CD-ROMs containing demo versions or self-running animated descriptions of software are placed in dealer showrooms to give a potential buyer the look and feel of new products before deciding to buy them. This looks like a scheme to move part of Atari's warehouse full of CD-ROMs without having to worry about developing too much software for them. It would certainly be nice to truck off to the nearest Atari dealer (assuming there is one nearby) and get a nice demo of any product that was intriguing. Most developers, however, have enough trouble making software that works and most users by now have enough experience to know that the only demo worth looking at is the final product.

Atari has alienated a number of developers by their demands for copies of products. The letters requesting this have been couched in a tone that seems guaranteed to minimize cooperation. The basic idea is a good one. Someone at Atari should know what is out there and should have it available for testing when someone comes up with bright ideas for a new TOS. Perhaps Atari could help the developers by purchasing this material.

Atari once had an "official" listing of products both online and in book form. This was allowed to lapse, but it should be revived, at least in the online form.

People who bought the original Developers' Kit from Atari were deeply disappointed in the product after it arrived. The main ingredients were a C compiler of dubious value, a very primitive Resource Construction set, and volumes of poorly reproduced GEM documentation from Digital Research. This has since been supplemented by material from Abacus, Sybex, and various compiler publishers. The C compiler has been upgraded. Contributions from Atari personnel have also been important, but many developers have found that extracting this material is frustrating and programmers who are not registered developers have found it nearly impossible to get help.

### **Self-help for Developers**

Given the absence of resources from Atari Corporation it is important that the members of the developer community unite to help themselves by helping each other. The Atari Association of Developers can be viewed as an effort in this direction, and its initial goals are certainly laudable.

The initial effort, however, is simply not ambitious enough. The emphasis on communications through GENie is one example. GENie has no presence in Europe at all, yet the development effort in Europe is said to far outweigh that in the US and Canada. Even within North America there are many locations where GENie access is prohibitively expensive.

AAD's emphasis on serving the registered Atari developer community is a second example of insufficient ambition, although it is probably essential to obtaining even minimal cooperation from Atari. There are many sophisticated users who could benefit from a knowledge of AAD's activities even if they have no need for proprietary information.

It is obvious that the AAD must broaden its scope if it is to have any impact at all. They need to field teams on the worldwide networks like InterNet and Usenet and they need to develop means of communicating with people who are not online at all. They need to be far more outgoing about their progress and goals and they need to demonstrate receptiveness to suggestions.

It is unfortunate that a number of important software houses take the position that they either cannot or will not spend their own money to help someone else. This is a very practical decision even if it seems shortsighted. Improved sharing of knowledge within the Atari development community is needed to nurture new programmers and to iron the kinks out of the products that are there already.

### **What About the User**

Both the AAD and Atari Corporation appear to view users as a separate species that rank somewhere below developers on the evolutionary scale. Users would be too ignorant to make use of any assistance that would be proffered to them, so there is no need to bother.

This view is probably reinforced by long hours spent on telephones and BBS's answering questions that should not have arisen if the programs had been well done or if the documentation had been well written. There is no such thing as a "dumb question." There is also a law somewhere that says that a certain percentage of customers never will be satisfied and that handling them is one of the burdens that comes with taking the public's money.

Regardless of how they behave, these people are customers and they are the ones who determine the success or failure of a product. If they don't need it they won't buy it. If it breaks on them they will be angry. If their computer-appliances fail them they will consign them to

the junk heap. These people are the market and any effort to deal with the marketplace must take their needs into account.

User groups are one segment of the marketplace that cares enough to put forth some effort on its own behalf and they would seem to be a good target for focussed effort by Atari Corporation and AAD. Atari should revitalize its user group liaison activities by providing up to date information on groups and their locations. Regular mailings of sanitized versions of the Developer Partner newsletter would be a good way to let these people know that something is happening. The AAD should also make special mailings describing their activities and recruitment efforts. The AAD could provide assistance on developer participation in shows and the user groups would be a natural vehicle for distributing marketing and train-

ing information on developer products.

### **Why All the Secrecy?**

Both Atari and the AAD seem to feel that they have secrets that are worth stealing. Of course, there is a need for some level of confidentiality with regard to products that are still under development and there are laws to protect copyrighted and patented material.

In all other matters, however, openness should be a key goal. The informed consumer is a more willing buyer. The press release from AAD seems to indicate that they are setting up something akin to a college fraternity or a masonic lodge, with secret handshakes and all of the attendant paraphernalia.

They really should reach out to the public, perhaps through an open category that supplements their closed one on GENie or through

regular contributions to the Atari press. The whole community wishes them well, but the silence since October has been deafening.

### **Has the Horse Already Left the Barn?**

There is a good chance that Atari and the AAD have awakened to their plight too late. Closed dealerships, reduced user group memberships, and slow sales are all clues that customers are standing back from the marketplace if they have not, in fact, already deserted it.

The stalls in the barn need some fresh, juicy fodder in them if the horses are to be lured back. The consumer needs to see clear signs of vigor in the marketplace. A highly visible, strongly active, partnership between Atari and its developers might be enough of a sign to attract attention for a short while.



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# PUBLIC DOMAIN POTPOURRI

## Shareware Sampler

By Brian Miller

When it comes to public domain or shareware software, I am often left feeling like a small child who stands drooling before a glass candy counter. As a boy, I can remember agonizing over what candies to buy, and which ones to leave for another day. I have had as much trouble coming to a decision as far as what to discuss for this month's column.

After a good measure of fretting and pacing, I thought I would sift through a number of graphic utility programs. Commercial and shareware paint programs abound, and desktop publishing is a very popular application for the ST. Graphic utility programs are frequently lifesavers. They make using these other programs much easier.

It is not hard to find graphic utilities. In fact, *Current Notes* has dedicated two disks to just these types of applications. Disk #254 and #352 include utilities for just about every occasion. They include picture conversion programs, snapshot programs, picture viewing programs, and even a paint accessory program for editing paint files stored in Gem's .img format.

Disk #254 is a treasure chest full of goodies. Chief among them is *PicSwitch*.

### **PicSwitch 0.7**

**Written by John Brochu**

*Advanced Software, 21 Northend Street, Peabody, MA 01960.*

*PicSwitch* is distributed as shareware. It is the first utility program I discovered long ago, and I continue to find it quite useful today. The program allows you to load pictures which have been created on other computers and convert the

picture files to Degas or Neochrome formats, which are standards for the ST.

According to Mr. Brochu, *PicSwitch* was originally written as a simple picture viewer for Amiga IFF paint files. In its later incarnations, the program was expanded to support monochrome monitors. It was also modified to read many more picture formats which it then converts to Degas, Degas Elite or Neochrome formats. *PicSwitch* can convert pictures from one resolution to another. It can also be used to print pictures.

I like the program's ease of use. Once you initiate the program, it presents a GEM file selector box. You select the picture file you want to view, and it draws it to the screen. If you attempt to load a picture format which is not supported, you are given that message. You are also presented with a listing of formats which are supported. Among the many which are supported are: Amiga IFF, MacPaint, CIS Vidtex hi-res RLE, and Atari Koala.

*PicSwitch* has enabled me to easily convert a wealth of MacPaint clip art to Degas. I recommend it as a useful, no fuss program.

### **DegaMac**

**Written by Frank Stewart**

*DegaMac* is another simple yet useful picture conversion program. As the name suggests, it converts Degas pictures to MacPaint format. It also converts in the other direction as well. This program has let me boast that I can use *Degas Elite* on my ST at home to develop clip art for use on the company's Macintosh. The program presents a GEM dialogue box which prompts you for

the type of picture you wish to convert. You are presented with another dialogue box which gives you the options available for saving your picture. It can even rotate the picture 90 degrees. I did encounter one problem. It failed to recognize several MacPaint files, which I was able to load as MacPaint and convert with *PicSwitch*.

### **DEGASAVE**

**Written by Jeff Seibert**

Have you ever wondered how the action screen from your favorite game winds up on the pages of *Current Notes* or some other magazine? Well, screen saving programs, like *DEGASAVE*, can make this feat possible. Once you have activated *DEGASAVE*, you can "capture" a screen by pressing the Alt key and Help key. The screen momentarily freezes and your disk drive grinds. The game or whatever program you loaded after activating *DEGASAVE* resumes. When you finally quit, you will see that the screen shots were saved as SCREEN#.PI Degas files.

This program is particularly useful for screen shots of games or programs that don't use the GEM menu bar. One limitation I have found when using *DEGASAVE* is that it does not appear to work with games which load automatically.

I have covered only a fraction of the programs contained on this Utility Disk. I have concentrated on those programs which I have had some direct experience in using. You should know the disk also includes programs to convert pictures to and from Spectrum format. It also contains utilities to convert *Print Shop* to *Print Master* pictures, and from *Print Master* to *Degas*.

*Current Notes* disk #352 in the CN Library features graphic utilities of more recent vintage. It would go a long way to round out your graphic toolbox.

It includes a slideshow written by Charles F. Johnson called *Art Gallery*. John Brochu, author of *PicSwitch*, presents his new offering, *Deluxe Slideshow*. Both programs are capable of displaying slides saved in a number of popular formats.

The disk also includes a Snapshot Accessory program. If you want to capture a screen where the GEM menu bar is present, the Snapshot.ACC program will do the job easily. You merely select the program under the Desk option. You choose the format you wish to save your snapshot in. You then rubber band the section of the screen you want to capture. The screen turns black for an instant as the snapshot is taken, and then you are presented with the File Selector Box to

name your photo. This is really a painless method so long as you happen to be using a GEM program.

## Image Editor DA V0.65

Written by Mike Bergman

I must admit that it was for Image Editor that I added this utility disk to my library. I own Easy Draw and have been frustrated that the package does not include an effective way to edit pictures stored in the .img format. Migraph's *Super-charger* program is useful, and works to a limited extent. I have wanted a program which would edit the paint file directly. While I could spend big dollars to buy Migraph's *Touch Up*, I really felt a simpler alternative would do as well.

*Image Editor*, may fill this need. He distributes this accessory program as Shareware, and employs an effective marketing strategy. The program is fully functional with the exception of the Save function. You need to send the requisite regis-

tration fee to obtain your fully functional program.

*Image Editor* will only work with high resolution on monochrome monitors. You run the program as you would any desk accessory. The function keys are used to select different brush types and other options.

A full-fledged paint program may be preferable for making artwork from scratch. However, for editing image paint files which have already been created, *Image Editor* would be hard to beat.

I hope this gives you a sampling of utilities which are easily available. It is by no means complete.

Remember to reward public domain and shareware developers for their efforts. Feel free to pass along useful programs which you would like to see receive deserved attention, c/o: Brian Miller 13848 Delaney Road Woodbridge, VA 22193.

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by  
*Frank  
Kweder*

For Atari XL/XE  
Computers

All four programs use a MOD function and come from a COMPUTE! IBM program which was also translated for the ST later. I never got around to using MOD in Turbo Basic so here I used COMPUTE's suggestions to turn it into Atari BASIC. I also added color cycling to MOD3. Press START to change the direction of the color cycling. MODMOD is a modified version of one cell of MOD3 which was enlarged, more sides were added, and color cycling too.

## MOD1

A series of multi-colored triangles formed one at a time until a giant triangle is made.

```
3 REM IBM TRANSLATION: COMPUTE
4 REM MOD FUNCTION
5 DIM X(3),Y(3),XD(3),YD(3)
10 W=0.1:W1=1-W:XSCALE=1:YSCALE=0.99:
H=2:VRES=166:SHIFT=2:II=1
15 GRAPHICS 31:SETCOLOR 0,15,6:SETCOLOR
R 2,4,2:SETCOLOR 1,8,4:SETCOLOR 4,0,0
20 FOR J=0 TO 3:II=-II:JJ=1:FOR I=0 TO
6:JJ=-JJ:IF I<J OR I>6-J THEN 110
30 IF J<2 OR I>2 THEN C=C-INT(C/3)*3+1
40 IF J=3 THEN C=C-INT(C/3)*3+1
50 X(1)=0:X(2)=39:X(3)=78:Y(1)=0:Y(3)=0
52 IF II=JJ THEN Y(2)=48:GOTO 60
55 Y(2)=-48
60 FOR N=1 TO 11:X1=3+X(3)+I*39:Y1=VRE
S-Y(3)-J*48+II*JJ*24:X1=X1*XSCALE+SH-
IFT:Y1=Y1*YSCALE+SHIFT
70 FOR M=1 TO 3:X2=3+X(M)+I*39:Y2=VRES
-Y(M)-J*48+II*JJ*24:C=C-INT(C/3)*3+1:-
X2=X2*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y2=Y2*YSCALE+SHIFT
80 PLOT X1/H,Y1:COLOR C:DRAWTO X1/
H,Y1:DRAWTO X2/H,Y2:X1=X2:Y1=Y2:NJ=M-INT(M/3)*3+1
90 XD(M)=W1*X(M)+W*X(NJ):YD(M)=W1*Y(M)+
W*Y(NJ):NEXT M
100 FOR P=1 TO 3:X(P)=XD(P):Y(P)=YD(P)
:NEXT P:NEXT N
```

```
110 NEXT I:NEXT J
120 GOTO 120
```

## MOD2

Instead of triangles, this program creates green and violet filled boxes.

```
3 REM IBM TRANSLATION: COMPUTE
4 REM MOD FUNCTION
5 DIM X(4),Y(4),XD(4),YD(4)
10 W=0.12:W1=1-W:II=1:XSCALE=1.11:YSC
ALE=0.976:H=2:SHIFT=-14
15 GRAPHICS 31:SETCOLOR 0,11,4:SETCOLOR
2,5,6:SETCOLOR 1,7,4:SETCOLOR 4,0,0
20 FOR I=0 TO 3:FOR J=0 TO 3:IF (I-INT(I/
2)*2+1)=(J-INT(J/2)*2+1) THEN 40
30 Y(1)=49:Y(2)=0:Y(3)=0:Y(4)=49:GOTO 50
40 Y(1)=0:Y(2)=49:Y(3)=49:Y(4)=0
50 X(1)=20:X(2)=20:X(3)=89:X(4)=89
60 FOR N=0 TO 18:X1=X(4)+I*69:Y1=Y(4)+
J*49:X1=X1*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y1=Y1*YSCALE
70 FOR M=1 TO 4:X2=X(M)+I*69:Y2=Y(M)+J
*49:X2=X2*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y2=Y2*YSCALE
80 COLOR M-INT(M/2)*2+1:PLOT X1/H,Y1:D
RAWTO X2/H,Y2:X1=X2:Y1=Y2:NJ=M-INT(M/4)*4+1
90 XD(M)=W1*X(M)+W*X(NJ):YD(M)=W1*Y(M)
+W*Y(NJ):NEXT M
100 FOR P=1 TO 4:X(P)=XD(P):Y(P)=YD(P)
:NEXT P:NEXT N:NEXT J:NEXT I
110 GOTO 110
```

## MOD3

Multi-colored hexagons appear in this variation.

```
3 REM IBM TRANSLATION: COMPUTE
4 REM MOD FUNCTION
5 DIM X(6),Y(6),XD(6),YD(6)
10 W=0.2:W1=1-W:II=1:XSCALE=1.2:YSCAL
E=1.02:H=2:VRES=218:SHIFT=-35
15 GRAPHICS 31:SETCOLOR 0,1,6:SETCOLOR
2,5,6:SETCOLOR 1,8,4:POKE 712,0
20 FOR J=0 TO 2:FOR I=0 TO 2:IF J=0 AN
D I<>1 THEN 110
30 E=31*(I=1)
40 X(1)=0:X(2)=25:X(3)=75:X(4)=100:X(5)=75:X(6)=25
50 Y(1)=31:Y(2)=0:Y(3)=0:Y(4)=31:Y(5)=62:Y(6)=62
60 FOR N=0 TO 28:X1=35+X(6)+I*75:Y1=VRES-
Y(6)-J*62-E:X1=X1*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y1=Y1*YSCALE
70 FOR M=1 TO 6:X2=35+X(M)+I*75:Y2=VRE
```

```

S-Y(M)-J*62-E:X2=X2*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y2=Y2*YSCALE
80 COLOR M-INT(M/3)*3+1:PLOT X1/H,Y1:D
RAWTO X2/H,Y2:X1=X2:Y1=Y2:NJ=M-INT(M/6)*6+1
90 XD(M)=W1*X(M)+W*X(NJ):YD(M)=W1*Y(M)
+W*Y(NJ):NEXT M
100 FOR P=1 TO 6:X(P)=XD(P):Y(P)=YD(P)
:NEXT P:NEXT N
110 NEXT I:NEXT J
120 TEMP=PEEK(710):POKE 710,PEEK(709):
POKE 709,PEEK(708):POKE 708,TEMP
130 FOR S=1 TO 48:NEXT S
140 IF PEEK(53279)=6 THEN 170
150 GOTO 120
160 TEMP=PEEK(708):POKE 708,PEEK(709):
POKE 709,PEEK(710):POKE 710,TEMP
170 FOR S=1 TO 40:NEXT S
180 IF PEEK(53279)=6 THEN 130
190 GOTO 160

```

## MODMOD

A many-colored spiral is formed.

```

3 REM MOD-MOD
4 REM MOD FUNCTION
5 DIM X(12),Y(12),XD(12),YD(12)
10 W=0.16:W1=1-W:XSCALE=3.8:YSCALE=2.
96:H=1.3:VRES=64:SHIFT=10:SPEED=32
15 GRAPHICS 31:SETCOLOR 0,1,6:SETCOLOR
2,4,2:SETCOLOR1,3,4:SETCOLOR 4,0,0
40 X(1)=0:X(2)=5:X(3)=20:X(4)=30:X(5)=45:X(6)=50:
X(7)=50:X(8)=45:X(9)=30:X(10)=20:X(11)=5:X(12)=0
50 Y(1)=26:Y(2)=10:Y(3)=0:Y(4)=0:Y(5)=10:Y(6)=26:Y(7)=39:
Y(8)=55:Y(9)=64:Y(10)=64:Y(11)=55:Y(12)=39
60 FOR N=0 TO 120:X1=X(12):Y1=VRES-
Y(12):X1=X1*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y1=Y1*YSCALE
70 FOR M=1 TO 12:X2=X(M):Y2=VRES-
Y(M):X2=X2*XSCALE+SHIFT:Y2=Y2*YSCALE
80 COLOR M-INT(M/3)*3+1:PLOT X1/H,Y1:D
RAWTO X2/H,Y2:X1=X2:Y1=Y2:NJ=M-INT(M/12)*12+1
90 XD(M)=W1*X(M)+W*X(NJ):YD(M)=W1*Y(M)
+W*Y(NJ):NEXT M
100 FOR P=1 TO 12:X(P)=XD(P):Y(P)=YD(P)
:NEXT P:NEXT N
120 TEMP=PEEK(708):POKE 708,PEEK(709):
POKE 709,PEEK(710):POKE 710,TEMP
130 FOR S=1 TO SPEED:NEXT S
140 CK=1-CK:IF CK THEN POKE 53279,CK
150 GOTO 120

```

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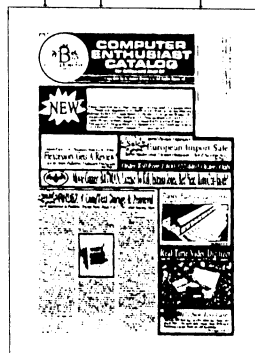
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# Geography Tutor

## Your Electronic World Atlas

Full Maps and Statistical Data Bases

*Review by Bill Moes*

There are a couple of ways I could begin this review.

Sure, I could moan about the shortage of learning software for the ST. But, while there is not a great quantity, the quality is fairly decent.

Or I could remind you of news stories that have pointed out how poorly American students do when asked fairly basic questions on world geography. But, as a professional educator, I have serious disagreements with the reports written by some of those headline-hungry hustlers.

So, let's begin this positive way: *Geography Tutor* is a new learning software program for the Atari ST. It should appeal to a very wide range of students. It does what it claims to do, and it does the job well.

### A Simple Little System

The mouse-driven program is easily used and clear in its presentation. Select a continent for study. The choices offered: whole world, Europe, Africa, North or South America, and the provinces and states of the U.S.A. and Canada. You'll note that certain regions are not specifically listed. They're available on a supplemental disk, described below.

At any time during the session, it's possible to select a new continent, take a look at the world map, adjust the colors (on a color monitor, of course), or choose to turn on/off the playing of national anthems of some countries. Not all countries have their anthems available on this standard disk. Yes,

another supplemental disk is available.

### OPTIONS

New Continent  
World Map  
New Colours  
✓ National Anthem

Once that initial selection is made, the learning begins. Select "Identify Regions" from the GEM menus and you're shown a map of the continent. Click on a region. It's shaded and identified. Click with the right mouse button and you'll see a screen of information on that country, 20 or so items. Click with the left button and you'll be able to select another country to identify. Both buttons return you to the main menu screen. It's all simple, direct, effective.

You may find yourself learning more than you had planned. The USA/Canada section, for example, will have you checking through some of the lesser-known Arctic islands as well as the major states/

### QUIZ

Identify Regions  
Country Quiz  
Capitals Quiz

provinces.

### Just in Time

Think you've got it all down? Ready for a quiz? It's possible to be quizzed on either countries or capitals. Let's choose country. One is named near the bottom of the screen. Click on the correct region. It flashes "yes" and your score is adjusted. A mistake? The one you chose is named, your score is adjusted, and you're asked to try again. Three attempts are offered, then the correct country is flashed and named.

If you want some help, press the right button. The correct answer is flashed and identified. Then you'll still need to identify that country. No score changes are

### THIS IS WHAT I KNOW ABOUT NICARAGUA

NAME NICARAGUA	POPULATION (000,000) 3.49	LAND AREA (000 HA.) 11875
CAPITAL MANAGUA	% GROWTH POPULATION 2.2	CULTIVATED AREA (000 HA) 1516
MAIN LANGUAGES SPANISH	% LESS THAN 15 YEARS OLD 48	CATTLE HEAD (000 000) 2.3
MAIN RELIGIONS CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC	BIRTH RATE (per 000) 47	CALORIES (% of need) 189
NOTE 1	DEATH RATE (per 000) 12	PERSONS PER DOCTOR 1800
NOTE 2	LIFE EXPECTANCY (Men) 57	% LITERACY (Men) 58
NOTE 3	LIFE EXPECTANCY (Women) 54	% LITERACY (Women) 57
NOTE 4	GMP PER CAPITA (\$US) 792	DEFENSE AS(x) OF GNP 35

MOUSE: <L>=DETAILS <R>=NEW SEARCH <L+R>=MENU

Data screen (Nicaragua) showing 20 data items plus space for four Notes.

made if you've asked for help. The scoring process is simple but sufficient. The numbers right and wrong are shown, along with the percent correct.

After you've selected the correct country, clicking the right button will screen that database containing the 20 pieces of information for that country.

This information can include: birthrate, deathrate, life expectancy (men/women), GNP per capita, area, cultivated area, persons per doctor, percent literacy (men/women), and more.

If you go after the capitals quiz, the procedure is similar. This program makes excellent use of both mouse buttons and is structured with sound educational principles.

### COMPARE

The Largest...  
The Smallest...  
Search Data  
Compare One Country to All  
Compare All Countries

### Hello, Hello There!

A major strength of the program is the database of information on each country. With the numerical information, it's possible to compare countries based on the largest or smallest for the titles from that database.

For example, select "The Smallest," then click on literacy rate. The country with the lowest literacy rate on that map will be identified.

It's possible to "Search Data," setting up your own cut-off point. Maybe you'll be after a list of countries with a male literacy rate of less than 50 percent. Those countries will be identified and listed.

Compare one country to all countries in a region with any one of the items in the database. Using our example of literacy rate, select one country. Countries with a

greater literacy rate will be shaded, those with a lower literacy rate will have a different shading.

All countries in a region, or continent, can be compared for any one of the items in the database. Select the item. The countries will be shaded and keyed for

### CREATE

New Data  
New Titles  
New Maps

that item. Then a list of the countries, either alphabetically or by size of the item, can be displayed on the screen.

In this world where more is never enough, it's possible to enter new, updated, numbers for any item in the database. And it's possible to create new titles for items, completely redoing the entire database with information that may be more helpful to each individual user. Then these changes may be loaded separately or may permanently replace the supplied information.

Obviously, this offers fine flexibility in learning software.

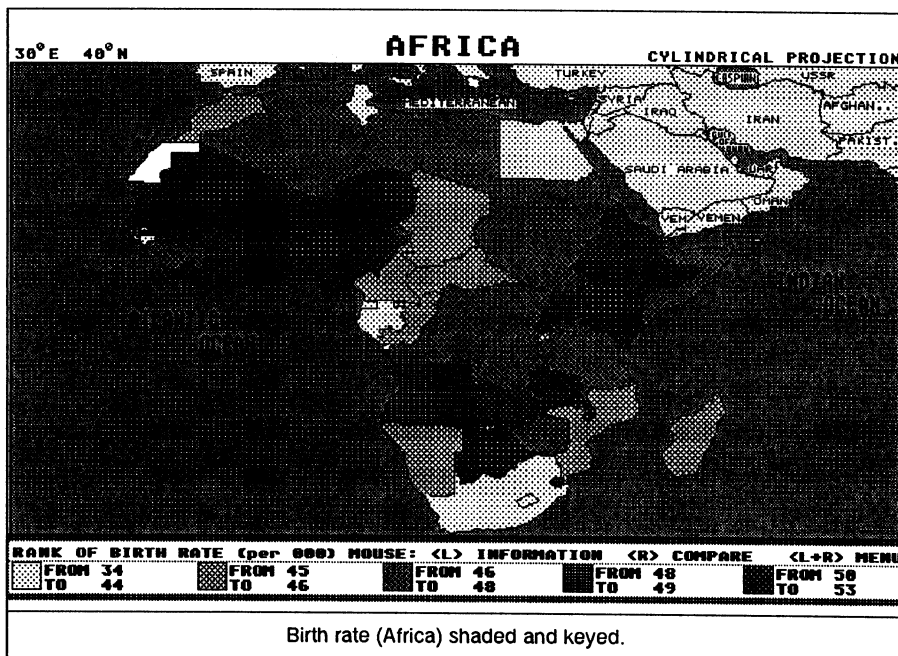
There are four boxes in the database titled "Note." You can fill these with your own information. Or you can load a Degas (compressed) screen as the Note. That Degas screen can, obviously, include illustrations and/or text.

Does all of this sound interesting? Maybe a closer look would be helpful. Try the demo disk: CN ST Library disk 384. *Geography Tutor* runs in color (medium resolution) or monochrome.

### Drop That Name

*Geography Tutor* (\$39.95) covers a lot, but not everything. Supplemental disks are available. A disk of maps and data for the Middle East, eastern Asia, islands in the western Pacific, and provinces of France and Spain is offered (\$15). A second supplemental disk containing the national anthem of every country in the world can also be ordered (\$20).

The most exciting supplemental disk is a construction set (\$30). Using your own Degas-format map, this construction set allows you to create your own map/data base. The publisher of *Geography Tutor* will then list your product in its annual bulletin.



Incidentally, the maps in *Geography Tutor* were created with Antic Software's *Maps and Legends*, another excellent product for geography students.

Students in 5th grade learn the U.S. states and capitals. This program will help. Students in 6th grade usually learn world countries and capitals. Again, help here. Students in junior high and high school need to know additional details on many countries in the world. Right here. And beginning college students often are asked to take a basic geography course. Again, *Geography Tutor* to the rescue.

Few computer learning programs can so effectively cover such a wide range of students. With a snapshot accessory, maps created could be included in school reports. High schools sometimes compete in academic challenges where geography questions are popular. Example: What country is located between Somalia and Sudan? *Geography Tutor* could be a great aid to students reviewing this type of information. (...it's Ethiopia.)

The documentation is a 20-page booklet that clearly explains the features of the software and carefully guides you through the program. The single-sided disk is not copy-protected, although a serial number must sometimes be entered when beginning the program.

### The Party's Over

So, with *Geography Tutor* we have an extremely well-designed program that offers help to students from 5th grade through college. It's easily used and, with the supplemental disks available, amazingly open-ended.

We'll not whine about the lack of ST software. We'll not listen to the self-serving critics.

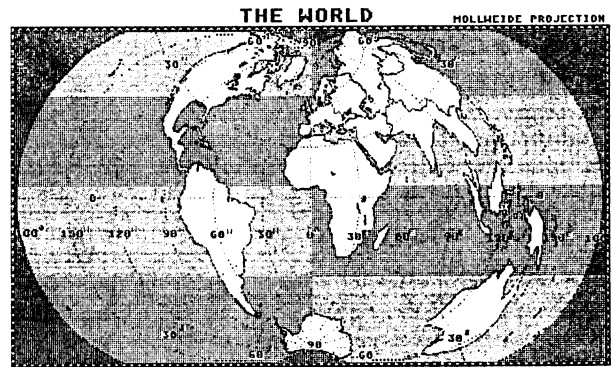
We'll take a look at *Geography Tutor* and know we've got a winner! I was most impressed.

[ASDE Inc., *Geographie*, 151 rue Jolicoeur, Hull, Quebec, Canada J8Z 1C8]

COUNTRY AND		% LITERACY	
ANGOLA	4	IRAN	56
ETHIOPIA	8	INDIA	56
SIERRA LEON	10	EGYPT	56
NIGER	10	SOUTH AFRIC	57
SOMALIA	10	NICARAGUA	58
CHAD	12	IVORY COAST	58
GUINEA	14	LESOTHO	58
YEMEN ARAB	16	CENTRAL AFR	59
MAURITANIA	17	GUATEMALA	60
BURKINA FAS	18	ALGERIA	60
MALI REPUBB	19	TUNISIA	61
GABON	22	CAMBODIA	62
AFGHANISTAN	26	RWANDA	62
QATAR	27	CAMEROUN	64
GAMBIA	27	SWAZILAND	64
DJIBOUTI	30	KENYA	64
CONGO	30	UGANDA	64
SAUDI ARABI	30	HONDURAS	64
UNITED ARAB	30	SURINAME	68
SENEGAL	31	IRAQ	68
HAITI	33	BOTSWANA	69
NEPAL	34	KUWAIT	70
SUDAN	34	EL SALVADOR	70
PAPUA NEW G	39	SYRIA	74
BURUNDI	39	BRAZIL	75
PAKISTAN	39	DOMINICAN R	75
MADAGASCAR	41	JORDAN	76
MOROCCO	41	LIBYA	77

Upper left hand corner of screen showing worldwide literacy rates.

## GEOGRAPHY TUTOR v2.5



This program provides ATARI ST owners with an **electronic atlas of the world**. You can learn about all the countries in the world. Not only are there maps available, but there is also a full data base of useful facts concerning each country. There are 20 items of standard information from the United Nations office of statistics

You can have access to **maps and databases of:**

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NAME OF CAPITAL	POPULATION
GROWTH RATE POPULATION	LIFE EXPECTANCY
DOCTORS PER CAPITA	LITERACY RATES
LAND BASE	CROP LAND
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION	GNP
MILITARY SPENDING	EDUCATION SPENDING.

There is a special data base for each of the **50 US states**. It has information on education, health and other social expenditures as well as many other statistics from the 1989 publication of the US Bureau of the Census.

You can view all facts, you can also plot them on the maps. You can compare countries, search facts to be plotted, order lists alphabetically or by size etc. All the facts can be displayed on the screen and compared or rank ordered between countries. You can update facts or insert new information in free fields. You can also create your own data base without affecting the standard base provided with the program.

Version 2.5 has the added feature of playing the music from the national anthem of many of the countries displayed. A disk with ALL national anthems is available separately.

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# Willow

## The Computer Game ... Enter CN's New Contest!

*Review by Bill Mocs*

**A**n evil queen. Magic. Unlikely heroes. A quest. Welcome to *Willow*.

A popular movie in 1988, *Willow*, full of adventure, was an obvious candidate for a computer game. After all, if something is successful as a movie, it should be successful as a computer game. Right? ...sure. Maybe the real word is "\$ucce\$\$ful."

### Into the Woods

Fans of the movie will find much that is familiar. Start with the scroll. Read and learn the story. And know that the scroll is also a doorway. For those words highlighted offer transport to parts of that story.

Select "Dungeons" and find yourself in a maze of corridors. Move quickly or find great danger in your path. Avoid the traps. Carefully.

And don't forget the Daikini crossroads. Cross the "Woods" to get there. Nockmaar troops will attack. Armed with magic acorns, you may be lucky. You must be swift and cunning.

Other adventures in *Willow* include the challenge of "Spellcasting," choosing the correct three of 13 runic charms. And the "Ice Caves" are good for a chilling thrill. Slide the path leading to safety or go tearing into the side of the cave, destroyed. And finally, the "Battle." Be a swordsman in your quest to defeat the evil Kael.

*Willow* can be played in quest or practice mode. The quest mode will challenge with all the dangers and obstacles in the proper order. In practice mode, choose just one of the obstacles for practice.

The documentation claims that input can be by keyboard, mouse, or joystick. *Willow*, a two-disk program, requires a color monitor and runs on a standard 520 ST.

### Follies

So: how does *Willow* rate? Alas, not well. It's been a long time since I've been so disappointed in a game.

It's almost a software axiom that popular movies make poor computer games. *Willow* fits that rule.

The graphics are decent enough, although nothing terribly spectacular. The music and sound are acceptable, although certainly not noteworthy.

The gameplay, though, is most unfortunate. I never was able to get the mouse to work properly. And the keyboard and joystick seemed to work fitfully.

Different game modules took sometime beyond forever to load. And they didn't stay in memory. If, for example, you choose to practice the "Ice Caves," that section will need to be reloaded if you choose to immediately try it a second time. It's an agonizingly slow process.

The actual game modules, which reflect major action sequences from the movie, seemed dull and simple in design. To be fair, I was not a fan of the movie. Like too many Lucasfilm spectaculars, *Willow* (The Movie) seemed more interested in flashy special effects than in sincerely telling a story the audience could care about.

And *Willow* (The Computer Game) (\$49.95) has managed to capture that shallowness.

So, what is there left to write? Well ... this one growls and barks. Don't buy *Willow*. Period.

### Assasins

But, okay, let's have some fun!

How about a contest?

Yep, once again *Current Notes* leads the way with true reader participation.

I was disappointed with *Willow*. Sure, something like that has happened to all of us at one time or another. So, let's take out our frustrations and *nail 'em!* Pick your most disappointing Atari game, 8-bit or ST. In around 25 words, give us the "why" on your Edsel of Atariland. Scratch it down on a letter/postcard and send it off via. good ol' U.S.P.S. to: Frank Sommers (you *did* volunteer, didn't you, Frank?), 4624 Langdrum Lane, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Deadline: the end of the month (*this* month! i.e. February).

Frank will choose one (maybe out of a hat?) as the grand prize winner. Extra credit given if you can explain how the subtitles in this review are related to each other.

Will *Current Notes* publish the entries? Maybe. Maybe not.

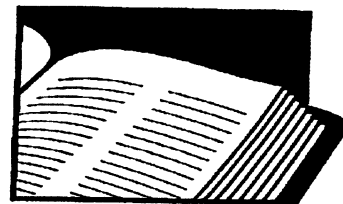
And what will we have for the winner's prize? Why ... you guessed it ... my copy of *Willow*.

[Mindscape, 3444 Dundee Road, Northbrook, IL 60062]

# BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE

## Four of Them, Count 'Em, Four

By Timothy E. Rapson



### Finally!

Four years of tears and we finally may have some Bible study software available for the ST!

In December 1985 I plunked down \$1,000 for a 520 ST with double-sided drive and color monitor. At the time this poor former seminarian was reading with great anticipation reports that a

California company would buy hard disks directly from Atari (with an anticipated dealer cost of \$200), install the entire Bible in three versions, plus Greek and Hebrew (the original languages of the Old and New Testaments), and sell them, drive and all, for \$400. Boy, was I an idiot. I believed the whole thing.

Four years older and wiser, and thousands of dollars poorer I like my ST, but I missed the Bible on disk. Now, in the Summer of the ST's life, four programs have appeared that threaten to make computerized Bible study an exciting possibility. They are, *Super Search*, *Seeker*, *Godspeed*, and *Spiritware Concordance*. These programs take very different approaches to searching the Bible for words and phrases.

We can forgive the lack of software to this point by the fact that Bible searching has been impeded on all computers by the elephantine proportions of the task. The Bible takes up 4.6 megabytes in ASCII format. Compression routines in Franklin's new handheld

Bible compress that to only one meg, but these compressions can slow searches a great deal. The information must be decompressed, then searched, then saved and then a new section started on, and so forth, and so forth. It can all take a *long* time. Yet, without compression we are

doomed to search four times the information; also a slow process. Two of the programs here, *Godspeed* and *Spiritware Concordance*, deal with the immensity of the searching task by acting

more like databases than word processors. They don't use the mere ASCII text of the Bible, but make their own data files that store the text and a list of its vocabulary in special ways. They are fast and they allow many types of sorts. *Seeker* and *Super Search* find words and phrases just as a word processor would. They are slow, they have limited sorts of searches, and they are slow. Did I mention that they are slow?

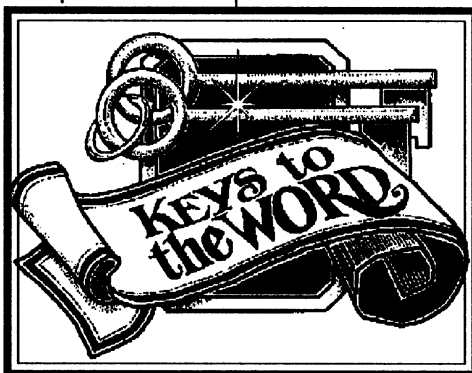
### Real Dedication

I must commend Rodney E. Haun who wrote *Super Search* and Larry Mears who wrote *Seeker*. They have obviously done an incredible amount of work. It appears that Haun actually typed in the Bible text (or substantial parts of

it) on an Atari 8 bit. This is dedication. Larry Mears has shown his love for his work by releasing the entire work as public domain. Each of these programs have some nice features (see chart). Nonetheless, I can't recommend them. They are written for 520 & 1040 ST's without hard drives and use standard slow search routines like a word processor. Almost anything you can do with them would be better accomplished with a Bible concordance and a pencil.

*Godspeed* & *Concordance* are in another ball park playing the game with the best of the field. *Godspeed* is also available for the IBM & compares well with the prolific competition there. *Concordance*, while unique to the ST (a Mac version is in the works) was written with the faster seek routines that set professional Bible search programs apart from the "home brew" versions.

*Godspeed* is a fascinating example of speed. To use the program requires a hard drive. You begin with four double-sided disks full of King James Bible data. Run the Makekjb.tos (make King James



Version) on disk #4 and the program asks you where to write the 2.3 megabyte data file to. Insert each of the disks in the correct order and they are "glued" together into one huge file on the hard drive. Copy the *Godspeed* program to the same directory and double-click on it. You are then greeted with a stark text screen that looks like a typical program of the IBM world. The word "find" followed by a blinking cursor about half way down the screen is the only useful information provided. Here is the definitive statement about this whole program... "find." If you want to find a word or phrase in the King James Version of the Bible this one will find it for you fast, fast, fast.

### Limited Utility

The problem is that this is all the program will do. You can't save the verses to disk. You can't view them in context (and the way the

program works I don't look for this to change). You can't print them. *Godspeed* is a fascinating look at how quickly an ST can access large files from a hard disk, but as a Bible study tool it is of very limited value. As a speed study it may be worth \$30. It is not worth the \$100 list price.



The real power and hope of this group stands with *Spiritware's Concordance*. This program does it all and does it well. It is one of the most elegant implementations of GEM I've ever seen. It will find your word, verse, or phrase fast. You

may save your work to disks or print it on your printer. Complicated searches rival database power. There is only one drawback in the current version. It will search only the New Testament. *Concordance 2.0* should be ready by the new year, with even more features and the whole Bible in King James or New International Versions. But, let us not repeat the over-optimism of four years ago. The future may look bright for this one, but even in its current form, it is a winner. The bottom line may be the best feature of all. You can have it free. It is on Genie as shareware. (Hopefully, as you read this it will be in the *Current Notes* public domain library as well) But, PLEASE send the authors \$15 for the full manual and most recent version. If we can get Don Clifton enough money for a MEGA 4, laser printer, and bigger faster hard disk there's no telling how far *Concordance* can go.

## Best, and Worst, Features

### Seeker

**Best Features:** Least expensive, searches whole Bible, faster than Super Search, probably the best PD.

**Limits:** Slow, requires multiple disk swaps to search whole Bible. Can take as long as 45 minutes to search whole bible even from hard disk.

**Recommendations:** With apologies to Larry Mears for all of his hard work, this program is probably not a worthwhile Bible study tool for most of us.

**Published by:** Larry Gene Mears, Ph. HAUG BBS 205-461-7893. Available in the Current Notes public domain library on six dsdd disks for \$24.

### Super Search, Word Search, The Talking Bible:

**Best Features:** Shows verses in context, actually speaks verses as requested using Atari's own voice synthesis routine, inexpensive, eight bit version available.

**Limits:** Slow, loads only small portions of the text at a time for searches.

**Recommendations:** With apologies to Rodney Haun for all of his hard work, this program is probably not a worthwhile Bible study tool for most of us.

**Published by:** Rodney Haun, Computers As Tutors, 325 May Court, Mt. Zion, IL 62549. Various programs, versions and data files (Old &/or New Testaments) \$5 to \$50.

### Godspeed

**Best Features:** Fast, does some complex searching, & contains whole Bible.

**Limits:** Will not save verses, print them out, or show them in context.

**Recommendations:** Not worth \$100 in its current state and is not likely to be upgraded.

**Published by:** Kingdom Age Software, 3368 Governor Drive Suite F-197, San Diego, CA 92122. Ph. 619-586-1082

### Spiritware's Concordance

**Best Features:** Fast, full-featured, inexpensive, easy to learn & use, good support, promising future.

**Limits:** Currently available with only New Testament.

**Recommendations:** Buy this program now.

**Published by:** Spiritware, c/o Fifteenth Avenue Bible Church, 15211 15th Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98155

I was given the copy of this program by Timothy Rapson, to review it, prior to its being given as a door prize at the Second Annual Central Illinois Computerfest, and I find the program to be good for what it does.

My first major complaint is that nowhere on the package, or on the disks, are booting instructions written. When I booted it up, it locked up on me. Because it didn't say it, I didn't enable BASIC in my 800XL. Instead, I tried my trusty BASIC XL cartridge. This caused it to change the screen color, and sent the cursor racing down the screen into never-never land. Naturally, I removed my BASIC XL cartridge, pressed Reset, held down the OPTION key to enable BASIC (Turbo-OS for the Turbo-816), and it worked. Considering the AUTORUN.SYS loader used, the publishers could have made the one minor change to allow the program to work with the OSS Supercartridge languages.

The program is not copy protected. In fact, the authors allow you to make copies and to give them out. BBS SysOps may place the data disks on-line, and if they send their name and the BBS phone number to the authors, they will provide updates.

The package comes on seven, double-sided (flippie) disks, employing Atari DOS 2.0S. Since they aren't copy-protected, they can be converted over to any other DOS that is compatible with DOS 2.0S.

If you leave them on the DOS 2.0 disks, and use them, when you enter in the Book you wish to read, as well as the chapter you want to read, you have to switch the disks to make sure the proper disk is in the drive. Although the docs say the program will only search on drives 1 and 2, I was unable to use any drive other than 1, without

## **The Holy Bible: The New Testament**

### **Review by Terry L. Ortman**

getting an Error-160. This is time consuming, but the entire package should fit very nicely in a one megabyte MIO, or a one megabyte Ramdisk upgraded 8-bit computer. This would make it virtually memory resident and would allow for reading the Bible a lot faster.

Some of the verses, due to length, are divided up and made part of the following verse, due to screen size limitations. An XEP80, Bit3, or Omniview 80-column version would probably solve this.

The major problem is the Word Search disk. Once again, it didn't say it required BASIC or not, so I assumed it did, booted it up, and nothing but the familiar READY prompt appeared. Apparently it makes an illegal Operating System call to the 8-bit computer line. Yes, I had to switch over to a 400/800 Operating System in the form of either my Newell OSNXL, or my Omniview 80, Operating System, in order to get it to function. Once again, nowhere does it say it requires BASIC, nor does it say it will not function properly on the XL/XE operating system, without a translator disk.

Needless to say, these problems can be fixed very easily by modifying the AUTORUN.SYS file to not use the illegal entry point in the operating system, but unless you are prepared for this, the software can prove to be very frustrating!!

The Search feature asks for a word or phrase, then allows you to enter a second word or phrase. It asks for the drive identifier: D1, D2, D3, D4, or BYE to bypass drive output. Naturally, I assumed that I

could enter a different drive number. After trying "D3" for my US Doubled 1050, it gave me an Error-160, so I tried again with "D1," and I still received an Error-160! I finally gave up and typed in BYE to bypass the disk drives.

After entering the search criteria, the program prompts you to enter the disk in drive 1. This is where the MIO, RAMdisk, or even a hard drive, set-up with Sparta-Dos's, or MYDOS's redirection command as drive 1 would come in handy.

The program then searches the text file by loading it into memory, then searching verse by verse for any occurrence of the phrase or words typed in. It displays the verse with the match found, and gives you the option to continue, go to the next chapter, print the verse, or exit.

I tried this, using the standard disks. It will find a match for any occurrence of the string in a word (e.g., if you type in "love," it will also find "loved," "unloved," etc.).

The copy I got came with an index already printed out, so I could locate which chapters and books were on which disk. Users can also print out a directory from the main menu, when they first boot it up and choose the Directions option. One printing flaw is that the program only prints to one side of each page.

The program is a very good implementation of the Holy Bible, and would do well for someone who needs to find a phrase, or otherwise wants to read various chapters and verses from books in the Bible.

*[The Holy Bible, The New Testaments, Computers as Tutors!, 325 May Court, Mt. Zion, IL 62549. 8-bit version cost \$20.00.]*

# 1989 Tax Advantage

Needed: 600 Copies to Make 1990!

Review by Richard Caldwell

Simon & Schuster, Inc. has added the best selling program *Tax Advantage*, by Harry Koons and Henry Hilton, to its family of tax preparation software. This program is available in versions for the IBM, Apple II, Macintosh, Commodore 64/128, and Atari ST computers. The program was produced by Double Eagle software who will continue to publish a version for the Atari 800/XL/XE 8-bit computers. This may be the last year for the 8-bit version unless more interest is shown by users. The goal is to increase sales by 600 units to pay for the cost of the annual updates. Versions of the program for all listed computers are available directly from Double Eagle software, but that is the only source for the 8-bit version. Ordering instructions have been included at the end of this review.

As a satisfied user of this tax preparation program since the 1983 tax year, I would be very unhappy to see another excellent 8-bit software program discontinued. I hope that by reviewing this program for you, some additional interest and sales will be stimulated which will continue its annual publication and update.

The *Tax Advantage* program is provided with a detailed instruction book which is very well written, easy to read and includes a complete table of contents and index. Most users will be successful in using the program without extensive study of these instructions except to answer questions about more complicated tax returns.

The tax program is very user friendly with a series of menus for the various tax forms beginning with Form 1040. Shown below is an example of the menu for this form beginning with line 7. These numbers correspond to the lines on Form 1040.

```

*** FORM 1040 ***
→  INCOME
7  WAGES, FORM W-2          0
**  empl.bus.exp.          0
**  wages, tips etc.       0
8a TAXABLE INT. INC.[B]    0
8b TAX-EXEMPT INT. INC.    0
9  DIVIDEND INCOME [B]     0
10 TAX REFUNDS              0
11 ALIMONY RECEIVED       0
-----
E-Enter I-Itemize L-Line   Q-Quit
U-UP    D-Down    F-Forward R-Reverse
+ - ^X  H-Help    O-Option  T-Tax

```

The arrow is moved to the desired line using the up or down keys, and the action for that line selected from the user choices on the menu at the bottom of the screen. The forward and reverse keys select the next or previous screen of lines of the form. Schedule A is reached by selecting the key to itemize line 34 on the Form 1040. Other schedules or forms can be reached by itemizing lines with the corresponding letter or number in brackets. The tax program recognizes the interrelationship of data entered on the various forms and flags lines with an "x" to indicate that these lines must be itemized one last time to complete the final calculation of the income tax due. The help function provides more information about the selected line. It is a good idea to use this function before making an entry to insure that you are using the correct line.

All of the tax payer information and tax form data is recorded on a data disk which is separate from the program disks. Two disk drives are not required but highly desirable since they preclude frequent disk swapping as data is entered for the various forms. The authors recommend that back-up copies be made of both the program disks and the data disks using the J-duplicate disk DOS option. These disks do not have copy protection, and the authors request that you respect their copyright.

Using a 9-pin dot matrix printer, the program can print completed forms which are approved by the IRS, except for the Atari 8-bit version. The 8-bit version prints all of the IRS approved schedules and forms except for Form 1040. This Form is printed in a draft format listing dollar amounts by line number to facilitate transfer to the IRS printed form.

The prices for this year's programs for the 1989 tax year are \$25.95 for the Atari 800, 800XL, 65XE, or 130XE with 48K RAM and \$35.95 for the Atari ST. Shipping is \$3.50 with \$3.50 additional for UPS Blue Label. Telephone orders are accepted at 1-800-443-0100, ext. 315m.

Please call me at (703) 356-4248 if you have questions about this program, or call Double Eagle Software at (213) 212-6611.

I hope that this review has been of interest and that enough 8-bit users will buy the program so that Double Eagle will achieve its goal of 600 new customers nationwide which will enable them to continue production of the Atari 8-bit version of the program in future years.



# Kidpublisher Professional

## Desktop Publishing for Kids in School

by Georgia Weatherhead

KidPublisher *Professional* has added and lost some features from the *KidPublisher* I first viewed and loved. This *Professional* desktop publishing program is targeted for elementary and preschool using a 520 ST with single-sided disk drives. It cannot be put on double-sided disks or into the hard drive. Yet it is worth the minimal cost to get it for your child three to nine years old to use at home.

Using the limited memory of single-sided disks, the program must be limited in itself.

### Text Screens

The *good* news for the text part of this desktop publishing for children is the addition of the title page for the five-page booklet that can be made. There is also a choice of one of four different fonts that can be adapted according to the curriculum of the school using this DTP.

Some schools start children printing upper case and lower case with simply drawn letters. The sans serif font will be familiar to these children. It is available in small lettering or large bold lettering. Other schools use a font more akin to cursive handwriting. The slanted D'Nealian font will be more useful for these children. For posters, an outline font is available. Only one font can be used for a book.

The CapsLock, space bar, Shift, Backspace, and Delete keys work with the alphanumeric keys in the same way they always do.

The *bad* news for the text may not be bad at all. Let us just say it is a different feature. There used to be a LOAD function whereby a book saved could be brought up from the past. Now the saved book is automatically loaded when the program

is loaded. Get rid of it by clicking the BLANK function to start a new book. The HELP function on screen is no longer available, which again is ok, because a child couldn't read it anyway. The bright red 24-page manual can give the teacher the information quickly. The teacher can carry the manual from computer to computer (if lucky enough to have several 520 STs in the classroom.) However, the procedures are not so complicated that a manual is needed very long. This is meant to be so easy a three-year-old can use it.

Children will love this creative program where they make their very own stories and illustrations.

### Graphics Screens

*Good* news for graphics are the best yet. The picture at the top of each page originally could only be drawn with freehand use of the mouse. This procedure of drawing on a horizontal plane of the table and seeing it on the vertical plane of the monitor is a very difficult operation for young children (and us older left brain types.) Now there are circle, rectangle, line, and 10 pattern fill features added to the free hand draw. The ERASE function has three features—pixel erase, small box erase, large box erase.

EXIT has been removed from the graphic screen. Exiting can only be done from the text screen. The name has been changed to SAVE, but the procedures remain the same. I have mixed emotions about changing the name EXIT to SAVE. Exit is a word all children

should be familiar with because of its use in all public buildings such as schools, movies, stores, libraries, and malls. As a teacher, I just appreciate the use of a lifesaving word in many situations.

The original *KidPublisher* had a program CONTROL.ACC with accompanying DESKTOP.INF to be added to the disk if the printer did not print properly. I tried to add these because mine does not. There was not enough disk memory with the new graphics to add these to *KidPublisher Professional*. The new instructions suggested getting Tom Hudson's program to make your own printer driver. I do not know when I would get around to that.

However, I called D.A.Brumleve to tell her my problems, which turned out to be with TOS 1.4. She had the solution right away and sent instructions of how to adjust the Desktop information to center the print. These instructions will be included in the new manuals.

One does get personal help with *KidPublisher Professional* immediately from the writer, a feature not always available with ST software. Support will be given by means of GENie, Compuserve, Delphi, phone, or mail. You cannot beat that support.

An added nicety to the *Professional* package are six preprinted labels for your copies. Each child should have his own disk.

I could bore you with the educational values of this program mentioning all kinds of skills to be developed, but it is better I tell you that the children will love this creative program where they make their very own stories and illustrations.

## How much is **YOUR** time worth?



**Turbo ST** turns your 520/1040 ST into a speed demon. Check out **Turbo ST** at your local dealer or download our free demo from your favorite bulletin board.

Upgrades to version 1.6 are only \$5 with your original disk. For more information, call (407) 657-4611, or write to SofTrek, P.O. Box 5257, Winter Park, FL 32793.

DOES YOUR KID THINK THE ST IS A *GAME* MACHINE?

## Kidpublisher *Professional* A Desktop Publishing Program for Young Writers

**Kidpublisher Professional** represents a major enhancement of D.A. Brumleve's freely-distributed *careware* program, **Kidpublisher**. Version 6.0 has been completely rewritten to bring your child:

- ✦ an automatically-loaded font set (4 sets included)
- ✦ a faster word processor with word wrap, an underline option, and movement of the text cursor with mouse or arrow keys
- ✦ a greatly-expanded drawing program with features such as LINE, CIRCLE, BOX, FILL, and the all-important UNDO
- ✦ a title page option which automatically centers your title, author, and illustrator
- ✦ many minor additions and improvements

**Kidpublisher Professional** lets your child (ages 5-11) write and illustrate professional-looking books and other documents. The kidfriendly features you've come to expect from the author's *kidprogs* series combine to make this program accessible to the youngest of writers. To order your child's copy, see your dealer or send a check for US\$25 to:

**D.A. BRUMLEVE**  
P.O. Box 4195  
Urbana, IL 61801

Demo version available for \$5.

OPEN PAGE UNDERLINE PRINT SAVE  
TITLE BLANK INFO

This is a picture of my house at 112 Happy Street. There is a big tree beside my house. I can climb that tree, and I want to build a treehouse when my dad is willing to let me use a hammer. He says maybe I can next summer!

Page 1

**Kidpublisher Professional's** typing screen is shown above. Five pages of text and graphics are automatically loaded with the program. Each printed page has a picture at the top and text below.

**REQUIRES COLOR MONITOR**  
Printer must accept an ST screen dump.

Dealer inquiries welcome.

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# *TV Sports Football*

## Easing The Postseason Letdown

Reviewed by George Hulseman

It was about a month ago when I casually informed my family I would be conducting important research for an upcoming review and to not disturb me for any reason. I then crept into the confines of what is known in my household as the computer room (equipped with an ST and a 130 XE) and loaded up *TV Sports: Football*, a football simulation from Cinemaware which, in fact, has nothing to do with television.

After several hours of careful research I have no doubts about the quality and effort that must have gone into the making of this program. While *TV Sports: Football* has its flaws, including a rather major one which I will describe later, the selling points of this game are most impressive, making it one of the best ST sports simulations around.

"So real it sweats!" the game box proclaims and rightly so. This entertaining sports simulation combines good arcade action with the strategy of pro football. *TV Sports: Football* features superb graphics and animation while allowing you to compete in a 28-team league made up of either computer or human-controlled teams or a combination of both. The games follow the rules of professional football very closely, taking into account field goals, extra points, safeties, and penalties. You can play alone or against other humans, taking a team of your making to the championship final.

The ST version of this game is a pretty straightforward football simulation with none of the gimmicks that accompany some of the other versions. The Amiga version, for instance, actually has "commercials" in an attempt to mimic foot-

ball as you see it on television. As far as I'm concerned such gimmickry becomes tiresome and the game is better off without it.

What *TV Sports: Football* does have is excellent graphics and fluid animation that is both visually appealing and realistic. Each of the 28 teams competing in the league has its unique traits, some having fairly strong offensive tendencies and others with the accent on defense. Each team can be altered and saved to disk, including the team you control which can be adapted to your specific game plan. This can be done in edit mode only before the season starts so there can be no changing around in mid-season.

When editing a team, each player is assigned an overall rating, his skills adjusted according to how many "talent points" he is allotted. Your number one player receives the most talent points and therefore excels in all four categories: speed, strength, hands, and ability. The way you distribute the talent points determines the strengths and weaknesses of that particular player. For example, you will probably want to emphasize the "strength" of your punter at the expense of his "hands" ability, which is essentially his ability to hold on to a ball. For a wide receiver or running back, speed is probably most important. How you divide up the talent points on your team has a direct bearing on that team's ability to win games.

The season in *TV Sports: Football* is 16 games long, as it is in the National Football League. Teams with the best records go on to the playoffs as do two "wild card" teams from each conference. The

winners of the two wild card games advance to the conference semi-finals and the winners of the semi-finals then proceed to the conference championship. Finally, the two conference champions meet in the championship game, a sort of video "Super Bowl."

Playing *TV Sports: Football* takes some time to learn, but is not too difficult to master. There is enough variety in the number of plays available to provide an impetus for experimentation. On offense you control the player with the ball. When passing you control the intended receiver both before and after he catches the ball. To throw the ball you move your quarterback behind the line of scrimmage and then aim somewhere upfield where, hopefully, your receivers will be running their pass routes unhindered by pass defenders. By pushing the joystick button and holding it down, you control just how far the ball is tossed.

Quarterbacks with high strength ratings can throw the ball as far as John Elway. If your receivers are well-covered you can hold on to the ball and try to run upfield Randall Cunningham style. Or you can throw it away, either out of bounds or somewhere away from the coverage. If you hold on for too long you can be called for offensive holding. You can also get penalized for intentional grounding.

On defense you can shift control between four linebackers before the ball is hiked and then either try to cover one of the receivers or go after the quarterback. Sacks are both gratifying and rare, and can be attempted without too much risk if you assign the other linebackers to cover the pass. You'll occasionally get burned, especially if you are on an all-out blitz of the quarterback. Defensively you can get called for being off-sides or encroachment, both five yard penalties.

On both defense and offense the computer will take over for you

if you do not input any moves with your joystick after a period of a few seconds. Although this is intended to make it easier for beginners, it can become irritating if, for instance, you want your quarterback to remain in the pocket while wide receivers are getting open. The computer will also choose formations and plays for you if you do not choose one after about eight seconds. In fact, the computer will take over completely if you would rather put the joystick down and simply watch.

While graphics are outstanding in *TV Sports: Football*, the sound is virtually non-existent. Just about all you'll hear is a theme song that plays before games and the clicks when you enter in each play. Don't expect any cheering when you score a touchdown unless you have an audience in the room with you.

The program saves all teams' standings following each week of play. When you are ready to play press **continue season** from the menu and you will see a schedule of that week's games. Select the game involving your (human-controlled) team and you will go to the playing field to witness the coin toss and then begin play. Results from around the league are determined automatically by the computer. If you want to watch a contest between two computer-controlled teams simply choose that option when the schedule of games is displayed.

Games involving the team you control can also be determined in auto mode if you want to weed out your easy opponents by letting the computer determine the results. If you're competing in a multi-player league and one of the players isn't available for his game, you can have the computer decide the game for him. No one can advance to the next week until all the games from the current week are decided.

As the season progresses, the league standings are automatically

saved to disk. If you lose in the playoffs, you're no longer in the running, although you have the option of turning the computer off if it looks like you're going to lose. You can also make copies of your game disk at any stage of the season. The game disk is not copy-protected; you can make all the backups you need. We all know, however, the consequences of distributing illegal copies of programs: less profits for the developers and less likelihood for continued support of Atari computers.

There is a rather significant problem that apparently only affects some of the STs out there, including the machine I own. For some mysterious reason the first playoff game involving a human-controlled team does not save to disk, effectively preventing a player from competing in subsequent playoff games and ultimately the championship final. The folks at Cinemaware are aware of the problem, but they have not corrected it yet because they don't know what's causing it. A spokesman from the company told me the failure is probably somehow linked to hardware since they are unable to duplicate the problem on their computers using disks returned by irate customers such as myself. The company will send you a replacement disk, but it probably won't do any good. I have not yet received mine, but I am willing to wait until the problem is corrected while I use my backup copy.

Despite this rather serious flaw, there is a way to take a human-controlled team to the playoffs. Allow the computer to determine the results of the first playoff game. If the computer decides you are the victor, then that first game registers and the league position is saved. You can then play the remaining playoff game and the championship final successfully.

If you go into the playoffs as a wild card team, you will experience

the problem in both the wild card game and the conference championship. I took a team of my own making all the way to the championship, but only because the computer decided my team the victor in the two mentioned playoff games. Although I had won both games on my own, the computer didn't acknowledge those victories and I had to allow the computer to determine the results.

There are other problems as well. Most of the computer-controlled teams you play are simply too easy to beat. Not that you can score a touchdown on every play, but nearly always you will outmatch your opponent without batting an eye. Every once in a while you come across a team that poses a challenge, but generally it's easy pickings from game one on. Theoretically you could attempt to take a statistically poor team all the way, but with the above-mentioned flaw in the program, you'll never get it past the first playoff game.

Another problem is that while documentation for *TV Sports: Football* is quite detailed and informative, it contains references to options not available with the ST version of the game. For example, the manual talks about viewing your opponent's stats to help develop your game plan, an option not included for the ST.

Overall, the folks at Cinemaware have put together a very worthwhile game. This is a sports game to be enjoyed and savored. I know of no other football game for the Atari computers that comes close to the depth and detail. The animation is very convincing; the graphics have to be seen to be believed. The complexity of the game of football is integrated very well into a sharp program which will have long-lasting appeal for computer sports enthusiasts.

Anyway, I've got to go. I have much research to conduct.

# Shufflepuck Cafe

Entertainment Software from Broderbund

by Milt Creighton

*Shufflepuck Cafe* takes place in the sort of dive you might expect to find in a seedy starport in one of the Starwars movies. Its inhabitants include some of the most exotic creatures you'll find this side of Millways. Interestingly enough, the entire crowd is hooked on the game of shufflepuck, a sort of cross between shuffleboard and ping pong.

In essence, shufflepuck is played by two contestants who stand at either end of a long, narrow table. The table has cushions on either side like a pool table, but each end of the table is open. The object of the game is to drive an object that looks like a hockey puck past your opponent's guard and off the end of the table.

## A Floating Paddle

The instrument with which you will accomplish this feat is a rectangular paddle that floats just above the table, allowing the players to strike the puck toward their opponent's goal. Each time the puck flies off the end of the table it shatters a glass-like protective force field and a point is scored. Serves alternate between players and the first player to score fifteen points wins the game. You don't have to win by two as in volleyball. Simple, no?

Well, it is a simple game and I have found that simple games are often the most entertaining kind. It's hard to categorize *Shufflepuck Cafe*. Strictly speaking, it's not an arcade game—there's nothing to shoot, no knives, rocks, or barrels to dodge and no swordsmen to kill. It's not a sports simulation either—it doesn't play like "Air Hockey" and there aren't all those confusing

knobs you find in "Foosball." It's not exactly in a class by itself; it's just good clean fun.

## The Joy of Slumming

What makes *Shufflepuck Cafe* fun is the atmosphere of the place and the opponents you play. Each of the denizens of the bar is a potential opponent and each has his or her own style of play. Beginners should start with the geeky Skip who will congratulate you every time you score a point and smirk if he should get lucky. After Skip, Vinnie or Visine are the next easiest. You shouldn't have any trouble with them and they are fun to play. The elegant Lexan is another matter and a formidable opponent—at first.

The others all have their strengths and weakness and you should eventually find a way to beat them, even if you have barnacle-encrusted reflexes like mine. All except for Biff Raunch. He is the most irritating of the lot; you'll want to shove that paddle down his throat each time he wins a point—and he'll win most of them unless you are very good or very lucky.

Once you've beaten all the players, you'll want to enter the tournament and try to beat everyone there in straight games. If you do, your name will be entered in the champion's hall of fame. That's what this game is all about, but it doesn't give you a good feel for what it takes to get there.

*Shufflepuck Cafe* is played using the Atari ST mouse. The mouse controls the movement of your paddle. It registers movement in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions and controls both the swiftness of your block and the

speed of your return stroke. It permits angle strikes for bank shots and straight-forward slams. I don't think you can really put english on the puck, but the rebound off the bank sometimes looks like spin might be taken into account as well.

The control of the mouse is superb—especially when you are fresh and aren't trying to make the mouse track more than it was designed to do. However, as you gain experience (and your mouse begins to show signs of wear) it is possible to over-control your shots and some of your quickest strikes will go awry. It's unfortunate that the mechanics of the mouse can interfere with the game, but it's a real-world problem upon which the game designers had to compromise. The mouse is still the best controller; a joystick wouldn't be nearly as intuitive. Once you get used to the limitations, it shouldn't interfere with your play. If your mouse is in good condition, it will improve game play—at the expense of wear and tear on the mouse, of course.

## Top Graphics & Sound

The graphics in *Shufflepuck Cafe* are excellent, and the digitized sounds are just as well done. They are appropriate and add immensely to the enjoyment of the contest. The animation in this game is one of the best efforts I have seen on any fast-paced game, and the characters (contestants) are both colorful and worthy of your attention.

Broderbund would have had a great game if they had stopped there, but they have added a number of additional features to keep the appeal of the game strong even after you have mastered all the contestants (or to handicap an opponent to learn his weakness). You can change the size of your paddle from a small postage-stamp

(Continued on page 67)



# SkyChase

## See How the Red Baron Shoots You Down

by Mike Heininger (c) 1990

With all the flight simulators available, there's still nothing as smooth, fast, easy, and pure fun as *SkyChase* with its split screen option that lets you see how your esteemed opponent (computer or human) is blasting your fanny from the sunny skies of Atariland.

*SkyChase* is easy to load, easy to customize for handicapping yourself or your opponent, and easy to play. Jets are wire framed 3D images a la *Starglider*, and just as fast and silky smooth. When my son and sons-in-law and I argue about who's top gun, the program that lets us settle it is *SkyChase*.

Forget about mimicking actual combat scenarios. It's just you and the other pilot. Call it the Gun/Missile Fight at the OK Corral/Cube, because that's where the action is in a large cube 50,000 feet high. That's so no yellow bellied coward can run very far or fly too unbelievably stupidly to stay in the air.

Choose one of seven jets, each with comparative limits on throttle, max level speed, max roll rate, max upward pitch change rate, and max downward pitch change rate. If you're a real J.R. Ewing, you can skip the F 18, F 14, F 15, F 16, MIG 31, and MIG 27 to opt for the Paper Airplane which combines all the best features.

### Customize the Challenge

You can also go for optimum fuel, ammo, missiles, missile lock threshold, bullet hit threshold, G force effect, and skill level. Either player or computer also can have a skill level of easy, average, difficult, or ace, corresponding to increasing levels of maneuverability. In short, you can make the fight as challenging as you like.

Main gripes are copy protection, which requires using the original disk all the time, and unrealistic gun configuration. The gun normally outranges the missiles, and is more accurate at long range than up close. This is because the default bulls eye is nine pixels, which are more concentrated when your target is a mere blip than when it expands to fill most the screen up close.

The missile lock threshold defaults to 20 pixels, and can be set anywhere from 0 to 40 pixels. Guns are fired by pressing the trigger button once; missiles are fired by pressing it twice. This takes a little getting used to, but is no big problem. Interval between the two clicks can be adjusted to fast, medium, or slow.

In fact, such adjustability is one of *SkyChase's* strongest points. While the defaults make excellent play for relatively matched opponents, the adjustability of all characteristics from fuel to weapon lethality makes big league handicapping a cinch. It should be no problem to match a real fighter pilot with a nine year old under such handicapping, the bottom line being a rousing game that is totally enjoyable for BOTH players.

### When in Doubt, Climb

Combat tip: when in doubt, haul that stick back and climb straight up. Altitude is almost always a virtue in *SkyChase*. In fact, the computer opponent can be considered handicapped even in expert mode because its pitch is limited to 60 degrees (less in other modes) while you can blaze a true vertical 90 degrees.

Nevertheless, don't ever get the idea anything about the computer or human opponent is easy. Just as in real combat, the instant you relax against any reasonably competent antagonist is the instant you're zapped. So who is top gun in your circles? Get *SkyChase* and settle it ... again, and again ... and again ... *SkyChase* will be your cost effective max fun per play champion.

Available from Maxis Software, 953 Mountain View Drive, Suite #113, Lafayette, CA 94549; (415) 376 6434. List price: \$39.99. Requires joystick (two for two-player option). Should not be run with RAM disk configured or other configuration or desk accessories that use much RAM. Operating system must be in ROM (TOS in ROM). Copy protected.

### Shufflepuck Cafe

(Continued from page 66)

size patch to one the full width of the table. You can set the speed of the puck's forward and sideways rebound and power from your paddle with the left button up or down.

In addition, you can add a blocker (an obstruction in the exact center of the table that will move when it is struck by the puck) of any size or weight. You can choose to play the android server for practice and set his skill to any level you desire. It makes for a formidable adversary even after you have managed to humble Biff Raunch.

**The Bottom Line:** *Shufflepuck Cafe* is one of the most entertaining games I've played in a long time. It is simple to learn, but challenging enough to retain your interest for a long time. The atmosphere of *Shufflepuck Cafe* is diverting enough to tempt me into a round against one of the better denizens (Eneg is my favorite) even when I know I don't really have the time to play games.

# Paperclip Revisited

One of the Best Word Processors Ever Produced for the Atari 8-bit

by David J. Harris

This is a goodbye review for an old Atari friend. One, I might add, who has served me faithfully for over four years, turning out everything from simple letters to college term papers. *Paperclip 130XE* is, without a doubt, one of the best word processors ever produced for the Atari 8-bit computer, bar none. Even so it has not received the publicity or recognition it deserves and now joins the growing ranks of discontinued productivity software. It's a shame that new Atari users are going to be deprived of the opportunity of using such an excellent program once the current supply dries up. I am still amazed that Atari has not bought out the rights to *Paperclip* and replaced *AtariWriter+* with it. Then again just about everything that Atari's management does amazes me (that's not a compliment).

*Paperclip's* features seem limitless, and thus I won't try to cover them all in this article. Briefly though, it has dual text windows, cut and paste buffer, search and replace, macros, mail merge, print preview, numerous printer drivers, and many other features that make this a truly professional word processor. Who says you need an IBM or Mac to do professional style work?

The features I will cover are the expanded text work space and the excellent *SpellPack* spell checker. These two features work best on Ataris with expanded memory, preferably 256K or more. The usual text file size on an unmodified 800XL is around 25K but when run on a modified Rambo XL 256K model, you have a whopping 112K of continuous text. The Newell memory upgrade requires a patch I am told, but it still will give you a respectable 90K of work space.

It's a shame Newell does not release a patch that would enable *Paperclip* to work on their fine Omniview chip. This chip gives a very readable 80-column display and has been all but forgotten by the Atari community. It seems that if *AtariWriter+* will work with a patch on Omniview, then *Paperclip* should work as well. Any programmer out there feel up to the task?

Dan Moore and Steve Ahlstrom, the authors of *Paperclip*, have implemented a superior method for using extra memory. Instead of the segmented 16K buffers (like poor *AtariWriter+*), *Paperclip's* methods of memory management are similar to those the Apple II line uses for expanded memory.

Since the 6502 can only access 64K at one time, the rest has to be bank switched. This is done in such

a manner that the memory looks and works as one continuous chunk of memory. The bank switching of memory is unseen by the user. The Apple II line has memory cards of over one meg, and the programs that take advantage of this memory have huge continuous work areas. These programs make the memory upgrades more practical as well as useful. We Atarians, on the other hand, have been limited in using our expanded memory, mainly as ramdisks with little software actually taking advantage of the extra memory.

Even with 112K of text there is still enough memory left over for loading the entire *SpellPack* dictionary into RAM. It does take about a minute and a half to load the dictionary, but it is still light years ahead of spell checking with a disk drive. Once loaded you can switch back and forth between the main program and the spell checker with no lost time, unlike *AtariWriter's* disk-based spell checker which must reload every time you want to use it. *AtariWriter+'s* proofreader mode takes close to a minute to load for comparison. Once your *Paperclip* dictionary is loaded you can spell check as many documents as you wish.

One bug in checking more than one document is that the menu asks you to reload the dictionary again which is impossible since you have already loaded it into RAM. The drive will not operate. To get around this, hit the Print error option in the *SpellPack* mode and then hit ESC after the first word is printed, and it will begin correcting like normal. I don't know if this is a bug common to all *Paperclip 130XE* versions or just my copy (my copy is close to four years old). Since this bug is easy to get around, you could say it is more of a nuisance than a bug.

After all of this there is still enough room left over for 16K of supplementary (personal) dictionaries. While not exactly IBM-like in size, these personal dictionaries can be set up in such a manner that they will take care of your most often used words that don't appear in the main dictionary. The manual suggests that words of similar nature should be put in the same dictionary for saving memory space.

For comparison's sake I ran a speed test between *AtariWriter+'s* disk-based spell checker and *Paperclip's* RAM-based spell checker. The file checked was around 1700 words long, and the results were staggering. *Paperclip* won hands down. After subtracting load times for both programs, *Paperclip* took

around two and half minutes while Atariwriter+ took seven minutes.

The one big advantage of using a disk based spell checker such as *AtariWriter+* and *Spell Magic* is that they can be used on normal 48K and 64K machines. *Paperclip's SpellPack*, on the other hand, can only be used on a 130XE or larger machine.

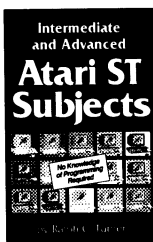
The method by which *SpellPack* checks its documents is another big plus. The screen is split in half with the bottom half showing the *SpellPack* choices and dictionary selection, while the upper half shows the file in context. If you don't know the spelling of a word, just type in the first two or three letters, and the dictionary will start there and scroll through the RAM-based dictionary until you find your word. Once you find the right word hit "yes" for accept word and return, and the word appears in your document.

Again a far superior method compared to *AtariWriter+'s* method of finding the word and then typing the correct spelling in. This adds greatly to your spell check time and frustration level. The 36,000 word *SpellPack* dictionary does not have the correct spelling for all mistakes but will nonetheless highlight every word it does not recognize.

Admittedly *Paperclip* is not completely perfect. Jiggle your printer interface enough, and sometimes it will lock up. Save a blank screen with the Write command using the same file name as a document that is already on disk, and you will end up with an empty file.

Despite these bugs it is still one of the few programs that truly uses the extra memory on the souped up Ataris intelligently. As I stated before I am very sad to see its demise. Even sadder is the fact that I will also probably never see the only feature it lacks—an 80-column display.

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# Prospero Developers Toolkit

Not Great, Just Good, and Worth the Money

Review by J. Andrzej Wrotniak

Prospero is gaining ground on the ST programming language market and not without a good reason. Without much hype they keep expanding their programming tool set; I am using their Pascal, FORTRAN and C very heavily without many complaints. No wonder that as soon as I knew their *Toolkit* was being shipped, I called them with my credit card handy. A few days later and \$96 poorer I could start playing with my new toy—and on my company's time, too! Now, after two months of using the *Toolkit* for about eight hours a day, I can share some remarks with you.

The *Developers Toolkit* can be used with any and all of the Prospero languages. It consists (in addition to some minor utilities) of five major parts.

## The Workbench

This is the editor-shell, from where programs can be edited, compiled, linked and executed. It looks and behaves very much like workbenches supplied with Prospero's individual compilers (which means good), but can be used with any Prospero language as well as with the assembler. All improvements (a dozen or so) are evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

This is a convenient programming environment with few minor shortcomings (slow file reading the most irritating among them). The replacement comes in very handy, especially (but not only) for somebody switching between languages

## Command Line Interpreter

Some of us may prefer to run the compiler, linker, or the resulting

programs from a command line interpreter (CLI), as opposed to a GEM shell. Also, some (if few) operations can be performed more conveniently from a CLI. Last, but not least, more frequently used sequences of commands can be grouped together in batch files and executed with a single invocation.

The CLI coming with the *Toolkit* is quite simple to use and behaves just fine. It also can be activated directly from the GEM workbench by clicking on a menu entry, so that both modes of work can be smoothly mixed.

The set of twenty or so supported commands could be a little expanded. No, I do not need a Unix or VMS clone, but, for example, the lack of the MOVE command can be, at times, inconvenient: COPY and DELETE will take more time, especially when files are moved within the same disk drive. A smart MOVE command will just change the directory entry, without actually copying and erasing the moved files.

I use the CLI occasionally, mostly to execute batch files (luckily, IF and GOTO commands are supported), but it is good to have it there in case I need it.

## Promake, a Make Utility

The interdependencies between various files which have to be processed to result in an executable program can be described in a *control file* with use of a special formalism. *Promake* will interpret this file and perform all the necessary operations (e.g., compiling or linking) to make sure that the files that depend on others are appropriately updated.

For example, if our program PP.PRГ is produced by linking of object files A.BIN, B.BIN and C.BIN, and if the BIN files are derived by compilation of appropriate PAS files, these dependencies can be described in a control file PP.MAK. If, after discovering a bug in our program, we correct it by re-editing A.PAS and C.PAS, then *Promake* will recompile A and C (there is no need to touch B!) and then—it will re-link the program. All this can be done with one mouse click from the workbench! For programs consisting of many files, the convenience is very, very significant.

*Promake* will work with all Prospero languages. It is even more general: the update operations are not limited to compiling and linking. I have used *Promake* with the Public Domain document formatter, *PROFF*, when my document heavily depended on nested INCLUDE files.

One remark: make utilities heavily access the disk (imagine all these comparisons of date stamps on files?). Even with a hard drive, checking the consistency of a library of about 100 modules (with no updates) takes three minutes or so. A reliable disk cache (*Cold Hard Cache* is my choice) can reduce this time very significantly.

Anyway, I am quite happy with *Promake*. It gets the job done reliably (if without bells and whistles), and I am using it all the time.

## Macro Assembler.

Do not expect from me an expert opinion on this subject. I was able to re-assemble some VAX-to-IEEE number conversion routines written years ago—without

problems. Combining and modifying some low-level GEM bindings from the Prospero libraries did not cause any problems either. All this, of course, from the workbench shell-editor.

### Kuma Resource - Again?

A few months ago in this column I mused about the lack of a *good* RCP for the Atari ST. I was hoping Prospero, with their high quality standards, would fill this gap. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

The RCP included in the *Toolkit* is the well known effort by Kuma from Great Britain. The *Kuma RCS* was for some time available in the US market; it is also bundled with *Mark Williams C v.3* (with just the logo changed). Do not misunderstand me, there is nothing *really* wrong with this program, but the user interface is quite inconvenient (not to say clumsy), and minor irritations prevail at every step.

Take it or leave it, we have not much choice here, as there is nothing really good on the market (*WERCS* at least has better documentation). Many people live happily ever after with the *Kuma RCP*. I stick to my old, moderately buggy, *RCS2* from Atari.

### Documentation.

The documentation consists of one volume, a total of about 120 pages. It is quite adequate, if nothing to write home about. The documentation supplied with Prospero languages was significantly better. The macro assembler section is very skimpy, and so is the section on the resource construction program. Sure, I was able to find things I needed (there weren't many, the programs are fairly simple to operate), but I would expect a better effort from a software publisher as dependable as Prospero.

The package also contains the updated librarian and the .TTP (stand-alone, as opposed to overlaid) version of Prospero linker. The .TTP programs are used from the command line interpreter (or from *Promake*), while the workbench uses the smaller .OVL versions. The newest updates of Prospero languages (\$10 and original disks) contain also the .TTP versions of compilers, necessary to work with *Promake*.

Those of us who use floppy-based systems for program development may want to use the Public Domain compression utility, *PACKer*, to reduce the size of all .PRG, .TOS, .TTP and .OVL (yes!) files on their system disks, especially if they are going to use both versions of the compiler and linker. *PACKer* will, of course, save also a lot of space on your hard drives. All Prospero programs work fine in the packed versions.

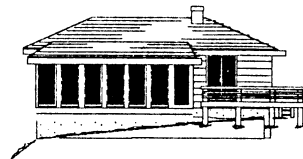
### The Bottom Line.

If I do not sound too enthusiastic in this review, this may be because of my raised expectations. After all, all programs work as advertised and in spite of all my reservations I consider the *Toolkit* to be a good investment. The price is quite moderate, taking into account the goodies included into the package.

**I can recommend the Prospero Developers Toolkit to any intermediate-to-serious programmer using one or more of the Prospero languages.** I also hope that Prospero will keep improving it with time.

*Prospero Software, 100 Commercial St., Suite 306, Portland, ME 04101; (207)874-0382.*

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*Disks listed by month of introduction. See page 74 for ordering information.*

### June 1989

- #327D: Sonus Superscore Demo.** Demo version of MIDI sequencing and scoring software packages, 1Mb, Mono.
- #328D: GENIE ST Roundtable Database,** by Library/Topic.
- #329D: GENIE ST Roundtable Database,** by File Number. These two disks contain complete database of ST files available within the ST roundtable as of June 1989. Program includes variety of search options.
- #330D-#335D: Seeker Bible Search Program.** 6 disk set has KJ version of bible plus program to help you find any word or phrase you choose.
- #336: BSTAT Statistical Graphics Program.** In a beta test state, quite complex and contains virtually any statistical function you might need.
- #337: Graphics Demos.** an assortment of AVS demos and a Cyber animation demo: Bugs Bunny, spaceship getting hit with laser blasts, four cylinder Honda engine cutaway, color only.
- #338: Micro-EMACS, Ver3.10.** latest version of popular text editing program now provides 'some' mouse support. Complete manual, help file, and text files on disk.
- #339: Extensor.** Game based on the LIGHT CYCLE sequence in the movie TRON. Color or mono.
- #340: Disk Label Programs.** Over a dozen different label maker programs from standard mailing labels to labels for diskettes, file folders, cassette tapes, or report covers.
- #341: Print Master Utilities:** PM\_2\_DEG, saves PM icons in Degas format. PS\_2\_PM, converts Print Shop to Print Master. Borders: REWVOL1, DINOREW, REWART1, CUSTOM, ICON1.
- #343: Utilities No. 29:** DISSASSM, DCOPY312, MYSTIC, MACCEL, RATEHD, HEADST10, GIFNEO, RAMBABY.
- #344: Utilities No. 30.** ACC.PRQ, DCFORACC, DCFRM301, QUICKUTL, QMENU2, QFIND, QUIKME, QUICKST 0.81, QINDEX, SCRNSAVE.PRQ, SUPRBT55.

### July/August 1989

- #345: Berthold Pics No. 1.** 8 exciting Spectrum pics from John Berthold: Anasazi, Blokbios, Duckneuv, Explore, Moonfest, Outback, Philtoo, Scape3c and spslide.prg.
- #346: Spectrum 512 Utilities.** SPCPRINT (print Spectrum pictures directly to printer, color or black-and-white), SPCCONVR (convert Spectrum 512 pictures to Degas P11), SPCVIEW (GFA Basic program to view Spectrum 512 pictures). Disk includes three pictures: laserbee, madonna, and redarrow.
- #347: MOTerm Elite 1.41.** The Ultimate Telecom Package for the ST, by Doug Johnson. Features many things that no other terminal packages contain, including medium or high resolution graphics which can be exchanged over the modem automatically, sound that can be transferred online, a new file transfer protocol called Dmodem that is

faster and more accurate than Xmodem, built in text editor for editing of information captured off of a modem or other files, an automatic dialer that will dial phone numbers while you do something else within the program, the fastest Xmodem file transfer routines yet available for the ST, and much more. Requires 1 Mb.

**#348: Game Disk No. 18.** Companion 1, color arcade action as you fly your ROCM, and Trivia Quiz, test your knowledge against the computer or other players. (C)

**#349: XFORMER Programs No. 1.** Includes Analog 35, 38, 41, 44. These are the Analog 8-bit disks converted to ST format for use with Xformer. Xformer is the Atari 8-bit emulator. (CN #263: ST XFORMER now has version 2.4)

**#350: XFORMER Programs No. 2.** Includes Analog 47, 50, and 55. More Analog 8-bit disks converted to ST format for use with Xformer, the Atari 8-bit emulator.

**#351: Publishing Partner Utilities No. 3.** 18 fonts for use with Publishing Partner: Binner, Blockup, Cyrillic, Futura Bold Condensed, Futura Block, Keyboard, Gothic, Lubalin, Old English, Oriental, Segment, Spokane, Stop, Timebold, Tyme/Helv, University, and Wilkes.

**#352: Graphic Utilities.** Metaview Prg/Acc by Ric Clayton. Program allows you to view GEM Metafiles in standard GEM windows. (Metafiles are files with a .GEM extension such as those produced by EasyDraw and GEM-Draw.) Will display any GEM Metafile, in any resolution, with or without GDOS installed, and (hopefully) run on any version of TOS. Image Editor DA V0.65 Demo by Mike Bergman (mono only), a tool to edit monochrome .IMG files for desktop publishing and related activities. Deluxe Slideshow V2.0, by John Brochu, combines all the currently popular ST graphics formats (Neochrome, Degas, Degas compressed, Tiny, and Spectrum) into one compact, but flexible slide show program. IMG Show, by Migraph, allows viewing of monochrome .IMG files on any resolution ST (low, med, hi, & Viking 1). Art Gallery, by Charles F. Johnson, shows Degas, Degas Elite compressed, Neo and Tiny pictures. ST Banner, print large banners out of small letters on your printers. Also Degas-nap.prg and Snapshot.acc.

**#353: Print Master Icons No. 3.** Collect 1,2,3,4. A collection of 479 icons for use with Print Master.

**#354: Print Master Icons No. 4.** Collect 5,6,7. A collection of 470 more icons for use with Print Master.

**#355: IMG Mortised Cuts.** 19 IMG pictures: angel, artist, backsign, dinner, dog, dragon, elf, frntsign, jackbox, jester, mirror, paperboy, ship1, ship2, train, trumpet, two elves, umbrella, wide man.

**#356: Bolo.** Discontinued.

### September 1989

**#357: PageStream Fonts No. 1.** An assortment of DEMO fonts available for PageStream. Note: these demos do not include the entire alphabet. Anglo, Opt, Typewriter, Downtown, Handwriting, Rock, Beginnings, Brushup, Karin ... +24 more fonts.

**#358: Calamus Fonts No. 1.** 15 complete fonts for Calamus. Chancery, Cursive, Condensed Cursive, Gillia, Gilly, Revue, Savings, Souvenir Medium, Souvenir Med Italic, Spokane, Study, Study Cond., Windy.

**#359: Pentimo.** This is a terrific puzzle game that will provide you with hours of entertainment. Place 12 pieces in box. Many variations, 100s of solutions, but try and find one! (M)

**#360: Bermuda Race II.** A racing simulation game. You have to learn the ins and outs of sailing to win this race. (C/M)

**#361: Game Disk No. 19.** Two arcade clones: Rocket Patrol (like Missile Command) and Trifide (like Galaxian). (C)

**#362: A Dudley Dilemma.** An AGT Adventure, by Lane Barrow. In this game, you play the role of a Harvard University student living in Dudley House in his/her quest for knowledge, adventure and a diploma. This award winning game is a very clever, humorous and challenging adventure in the classic style of Infocom. (C/M)

**#363: Tark,** Priestess of the first church, in her battle against the demon of dark desire, an AGT adventure by Philip Kegelmeyer. An extremely well written game based on a "Dungeons and Dragons" theme (complete with spells and hit points) where you play a priestess struggling against the forces of evil. (C/M)

**#364: Rapture and Susan(R).** Two more AGT adventures: Love's Fiery Rapture, by Natasha Mirage. A torrid tale of what could turn out to be THE perfect date. A parody(?) of romance novels like those published by Harlequin. This game demonstrates a very clever way to translate a "Choose Your Own Adventure" style game into an AGT game. Susan, A Lustful Game, By Bill Larkins. You attempt to score points with your girlfriend, Susan. R-rated game for adults only. (C/M)

**#365: Ring & Pork.** Two more AGT adventures: Des Ring DesNibelungen, by Michael R. Harris. You play the role of Siegfried in an adventure based on the operas of Richard Wagner—complete with a very tender and loving Brunnhilde. A very unusual approach to an adventure game. PORK, by David Malmberg. A parody of the Infocom game of ZORK. If you were ever frustrated by ZORK, playing this game is your chance to enjoy the sweet fruits of revenge. (C/M)

**#366: The Adventure Game Toolkit (AGT).** A shareware product that lets you construct your own adventure games. Complete Docs included. Adventure games above are all compiled versions of games created with AGT. Programs on disk are ARC'd. (C/M)

**#367: AGT Source Code.** Includes (ARC'd) the source code to 9 additional AGT adventures: Colossal Cave Adventure, Crusade, Elf's Adventure, A Fable, Ghost Town, Paranoia, Odieu's Quest, The Squynchia Adventure, An Underground Adventure.

**#368D: VIDI-ST No. 1.** Two VIDI-ST digitized animation sequences of a dunk shot and a pitch. Requires 1Mb. DS-disk (C)

**#369D: VIDI-ST No. 2.** A VIDI-ST digitized animation, star basketball player (V. Johnson) shooting a basket. Requires 1 MB DS-disk (C).

## October 1989

**#370: NORAD.** Watch your screen as 97 satellites and meteors trace out their paths on your monitor.

**#371: Berthold's Pics No. 2.** A second disk of 8 terrific Spectrum pictures by John Berthold. The Legend of the Lost Fuji, Msiau Chou Descending Into the Mist, Fantasy Figure 3, The Escape of Princess Mon-Haat, Skate Riguel, The Story Teller, Eilean Donan Castle-Scotland, Vlacherna Convent-Greece. (Color)

**#372: Magniwriter ST.** (See CN#401)

**#373: Strip Breakout (R).** Breakout game with a new twist. Breaking the bricks reveals picture underneath. 27 screens. Adults only. (Color).

**#374: Codehead/C.F. Johnson Utility Collection.** Collection of shareware products and three demos of commercial products from Codehead Software and C.F. Johnson. Includes Little Green File Selector v1.4, Pinhead v1.3 and more.

**#375: Darek Mihocka Utility Collection.** The complete collection of Darek's 'Quick' utilities (Quick ST to compete against Turbo ST, Quick Index to measure your ST's performance are among the 'Quick' utilities) as well as his Megablitz paint program and Megawatt accessory.

**#376: NeoDesk Icon Collection.** A collection of 31 icon files for use with NeoDesk 2.0. Includes NeoDesk demo program. Files are ARC'd.

**#377: Official Atari Utilities Disk.** Includes Atari's latest Hard Disk utilities and booter (version 3.01) which allows more than 4 partitions and partition sizes of up to 1 gigabyte. Also included is the complete set of the 'official' Atari Rainbow TOS utilities and patches. (Rainbow TOS is the name for TOS 1.4). Includes the Hard Disk Ship ACC, Mouse Accelerator II and more.

**#378: ELAN 1.5.** Another nice programming language environment from The Neatherlands with sample source code and documentation in TEX format.

**#379: Utility Disk #31.** Disk Utilities. DCOPY 3.2A--the latest version of this terrific all around utility. DISKVfy--verifies a disk to find the bad spots on a disk. FLOORMT2--Floormatter is a nice formatting program that runs in low resolution. GEMLABEL--version 3 of a nice GEM based labeling program. ACK2PRG--an updated version of a program that shrinks the sizes of executable programs.

## November 1989

**#380: The Revolution Handbook.** By Donald A. Thomas, Jr., 1989 ARTISAN SOFTWARE, this 'handbook' comes with a viewer program that allows you to browse through the handbook on the screen.

**#381: VanTerm Version 3.8!** VanTerm is a full-featured terminal program for the Atari ST (c) 1987 by Wm. A. Van Nest, Sr. Besides the main VanTerm program (and its associated configuration and help files), this disk also includes DCOPY32.PRg (current version of DCOPY) - DCOPY is faster than ARC, compresses more than ARC, has all the ARC functions of ARCSHL, plus it formats diskettes, prints file, reformats files of many

types, and more! (NOTE: this update replaces the earlier version, #265. Send in your original #265 and \$1, and CN will be happy to update your copy.)

**#382: SUB\_CAL, Version 1.14.** This is a new, improved and expanded version of Sub\_Cal. Sub\_Cal is a calculator with many, many extras. It will compute arithmetic expressions entered in a human-readable form and will also compute definite integrals, derivatives or solve equations. It will also solve polynomial equations up to the second degree. A simple plotting feature is included as well. The new Sub\_Cal also allows for vector and matrix operations (including solving of linear equation systems). (NOTE: this update replaces #322. Send in your original #322 and \$1, and CN will be happy to update your copy.)

**#383: The American PaSTime Baseball Simulator, Demo Game Program - V2.00D,** October, 1989. The American PaSTime Baseball Simulator provides a very rich and accurate simulation of the game of baseball, from the viewpoint of the manager. Results are based on the actual statistics of the players entered; variation from reality will be approximately the same as the actual variation players experience in real life.

**#384: Geography Tutor Demo.** Demo version of the program, only the data base and map for EUROPE can be loaded. Save functions have also been disabled. Disk includes data base of useful facts concerning each European country. Not only can you view these facts, but you can plot them on the maps. You can also compare countries, search facts to be plotted, order lists alphabetically or by size etc..

Also included is a **Reader Program** designed to help you read any text file. It lets your screen behave as a printed page. You can change to the next or previous page or flip to a page of your choice. You can also: search for text strings, show a table of contents, print any part of the text with references and notes, and save your print selection to disk or printer or both.

**#385: Double Click Software Shareware Sampler Disk.** DC FORMATTER 3.02--formatting program with a host of useful options. MYSTIC FORMATTER 1.0--formatter in desk accessory format. DC XTRACT--extract programs from ARC files. DC CLOCK V3.3--places time clock in upper right corner of screen. DC DESKEY V1.0--a desktop menu selector using keystrokes. DC STUFFER V0.9--load in up to 32 desk accessories (DAS) into GEM.

**#386D: JIL2D(tm) Shareware Drafting Package.** A valuable drafting tool: you can create, measure, dimension, save, and restore drawings using JIL's unique interface. You can also make and use screen dumps, figure libraries, and parametric macros, just to name a few applications. System requirements: monochrome ONLY, DS, at least 1 Mb of ram. Includes MONOVIEW.PRg: (a short slide show presentation of the JILCAD system components.)

**#387: Empire Map Collection.** A collection of ALL of the maps for *Empire* we've been able to find--over 120 maps in all. This

disk does require the game *Empire* from Interstel to be useful.

**#388: Breach Scenario Collection.** A collection of many Breach scenarios, Breach Cheat 2, and a squad leader editor. In order to fit this collection on one disk the scenarios are ARC'd but ARC.TTP and ARC Shell II v2.0 are provided to extract the files.

**#389: Game Disk #20: Star Trek.** STOS variation of the Star Trek game. This game will NOT run on machines with TOS 1.4 installed!

**#390D: Game Disk #21: Pile-Up.** A STOS variation of the Russian game of Tetris. This game is on a DS disk and will NOT run on machines with TOS 1.4 installed.

**#391: Game Disk #22: Super Breakout.** A very nice variation of Breakout with an editor. Requires a monochrome monitor and it DOES work with TOS 1.4.

**#392D: Spectrum Pics No. 6: People.** 17 Spectrum pictures (Alf, Anticad, Blade1, Clown, Donnaric, Ellen, Girl, Headroom, Kissme, Lady\_clr, Laura, Lisaw, Madonna, Match5, Sam4, Samfox1, Terri).

**#393D: Spectrum Pics No. 7: Space.** 20 Spectrum pictures (Aliennat, Callisto, Dethstar, Earth, Faces, Finhorn5, Glass, Juggy, Jupiter, Laserbee, Launch, Newtek, Outblue, Prism, Stardest, Timextal, Trek, Trontank, Voyager).

**#394D: Spectrum Pictures No. 8: Cars** and more. 18 Spectrum pictures (Appleton, Cobra, Convert, Decoy, Ferrari, Homer, Lilypond, Magnum, Mansion, Mazda, Ninja, Porsche, Redrx7, Redwing, Ship, Taxi, Tut, Tutmirr2).

## December 1989

**#395D--#399D: The TeX Distribution.** Compiled by Horace Mitchell. TeX system requirements: 1Mb memory, double-sided drive. The TeX Distribution has a core of four double-sided disks and a fifth DS utility disk. These disks replace the earlier CN TeX release (#309D, #310D, and #311D). Send in your earlier three disks and we will be glad to replace them with #395, #396, and #397 for \$1 each.

**#395D: TEX,** and **#396D: DRIVERS.** Disks 1 and 2 contain the files for running TeX (and LaTeX) and for printing TeX documents respectively. These two disks are sufficient for trying out TeX. However, there are NOT enough font files included on Disk 2 for a complete implementation of TeX. Note also that Disk 1 (#395) includes the ZOO compaction program needed to uncompact the files provided on all five disks in the set.

**#397D: METAFONT.** Disk 3 contains the font generation program METAFONT, which can create any font that the printer drivers on Disk 2 need.

**#398D: INITEX.** IniTeX, a program for customizing TeX plus the slide maker SliTeX and the bibliography database BibTeX.

**#399D: PICTEX.** PICTEX--a set of TeX macros designed for the creation of figures and graphs within TeX documents. MuTeX--a set of TeX macros and fonts for typesetting music scores. INPUT2 archive contains various style files for LaTeX that are not part of the standard style set described in the LaTeX manual.

**#400: GFA Tutorial.** NOT a tutorial for those of you already familiar with GFA Basic. Just a plain and simple guide from square one for learning the use of GFA.

**#401: ST WRITER V3.4.** Latest version of this excellent word processor by Dr. Bruce Noonan. Disk includes **English, Spanish, German, and MagniWriter** versions, all updated to version 3.4.

**#402: Construction Estimator V1.8.** Use this program to help you estimate the quantity and cost of materials for various building projects.

**#403: Utility Disk #32.** (Color) Note, CHEETAHC, GEMRED, and SPEEDRDR also work in monochrome and are on the mono utilities disk (#404). CHEETAHC--handy program for copying multiple files from one place to another. GEMRED--redirects the output of programs such as screen output to a printer or file. ADBASE14--an address database program. DSKCHART--displays a chart of disk usage. FFIND12--a disk library program. SPEEDRDR--improve your speed reading.

**#404: Utility Disk #33.** (Monochrome) PUBPAINT--a pd paint program from Germany--docs are in German. CHEETAHC--handy program for copying multiple files from one place to another. GEMRED--redirects the output of programs such as screen output to a printer or file. SPEEDRDR--improve your speed reading. Note CHEETAHC, GEMRED, and SPEEDRDR also work on Color and are on #403.

**#405: DeskJet Utilities & Drivers.** ADDRESS2--Programs to address envelopes with the HP DeskJet. COMPACT--a very handy program for hard drive users to print out directories on a DJ at 20 cpi (this program also works with Epson compatible printers using superscript). DESKJET.CFG--Word Writer ST driver for the DeskJet. DJETBOOT--if the DeskJet is online when the system is booted with this program in the AUTO folder, then it will set the DJ to draft mode. DJDEGAS--a program to print any DEGAS .PI? picture on an HP DeskJet. DVI\_DJ--DVI output driver for the DeskJet and TeX. EPSJET--not a great DJ driver but a workable one to give graphics output comparable to an Epson MX-80. FS\_DJET--a DJ driver for installation within Fleet Street Publisher v2.0. HPDSKJET--DeskJet printer driver for use with First Word Plus. JETLAB11--a labelling program for use with the HP printers that supports two label sizes and has several nice features. JETSET--an accessory to allow easy configuration of the HP DJ. LASERJET--downloads softfonts to either a DeskJet or a LaserJet. P\_OR\_SAV--two variations of a program (one for DeskJet owners) that allows one to print or save a screen in an average of 3 sec. SHTPDJ--printer control file for using an HP DJ with Sheet. SHTPDJP--printer control file for using a DeskJet Plus with Sheet. STW\_HPDI--ST Writer printer driver for the DJ internal fonts. TESTFONT--two test softfonts for the DeskJet (Candyland and Camelot).

**#406: Utility Disk #34.** There are three utilities that work in both color and monochrome on this disk: ASSASSIN--a great help in simplifying the modification of GDOS

ASSIGN.SYS files; BOOSTV09--a beta version of a program that works very well in allowing one to select which programs and DESKTOP.INF files are used at bootup; DESK MANAGER v2.7--another update to another great program from C.F. Johnson and provides a GEM interface for the user to select various bootup options.

**#407: SHEET Demo.** SHEET is a 4-in-1 integrated package. It is a spreadsheet program, database manager, charting program and BASIC interpreter. The charting program can generate graphs on screen. If you have GDOS installed, you can set the output to meta-file or printer. The charting program can also generate BASIC commands for drawing the graph. The demo version has Save and Load WKS disabled.

**#408: Ani ST.** (Color) By Jim Kent, Program Copyright Dancing Flame, 1987. Documentation Copyright Antic Publishing 1989. This program and documentation may be freely distributed. You may be familiar with the program previously marketed by Aegis as *Aegis Animator*™. Jim Kent, who wrote the program, has received the rights to it back from Aegis. Citing an inability for people to find the program, he has entered it in the shareware market under the new name Ani ST. The suggested contribution is a smile. The only change made in the program is a fix to a problem the program had running with GDOS. A color monitor is required.

Ani ST excels in what is known as metamorphic polygon animation (polymorphic for short). In this type of animation you draw an initial shape and move it into another shape. The computer generates the in-between shapes automatically. You can do this over a painted (.NEO or .PI1) background or you can cut out pieces of a picture (CEL's and MSK's) to move along a path, color cycle the result, then fade to black as the polygons shrink in the distance.

**#409D: CYBER ANIMATIONS: VISITOR & FROGGIE.** VISITOR is a 230-frame, 15-second loop animation in the Cyber Paint .SEQ format. It was produced with CAD-3D 2.0 and the Cyber Control language with image processing in Cyber Paint.

## January/February 1990

**#410 Spectrum Color Clip Art.** This clip art, by Steve Marshall, is designed to allow Spectrum users to add detailed figures to their own creations. Includes Animals 1,2,3, City\_bld, Country, Mountains, Skies, Trees, Western 1,2, and Vehicles. Also includes three sample complete pictures: Meadow, Street, Scene1. (C)

**#411: SpiritWare Concordance, V2.0.** A Bible study tool that makes maximum use of mouse, windows, and menu capabilities of GEM to provide user with a fast, easy and powerful way to access words and phrases that appear in the scriptures. Includes text from Romans 1 through Philemon 1. Color or Mono, requires 1Mb.

**#412: File Compression Utilities.** ARC 6.01--MUCH faster version of ARC. ARC-SHELL 2.1--GEM shell for both LZH and ARC makes it much easier to use compression utilities. LHARC 51--slower than ARC but

produces smaller files. ARC<-->LZH--converts ARC files to LZH or LZH files to ARC.

**#413: Utility Disk No. 35.** CHECK 1A--basic system check for color STs, does memory checks, shows memory sizes, drive and printer status, and checks video and audio hardware. CHEETAH2--very fast file copier, great for moving files across hard drive partitions. Works with floppy drives as well. TRASHCAN--a Neodesk accessory, a recoverable trashcan gives Nel-desk a trash can that can be opened and files un-deleted even after writing to disk or rebooting. DIARY 1.7--full features text editor as a desk accessory.

**#414: Utility Disk No. 36.** DC SHOWIT--complete replacement for GEM show routine. views text files and uncompressed Neo and Degas pics. STARSTRK--screen saver, fills screen with moving stars. LGSELECT16B--latest version of little green item selector by Charles F. Johnson. SUPERBOOT 6.0--Allows user to configure auto program, desk accessory, desktop information files, assign system files and much more before machine boots. Now works properly with TOS 1.4. SWITCH 630--allows Atari laser printer users to shut Diablo emulator on and off freeing printer port.

**#415: How to do Hardware Mods.** Contains various text files for those who like to modify their hardware. 25MGUM--how to upgrade a 520ST to 2.5MB or 4MB, plus programs to test the upgrades. MEGA2TO4--How to upgrade a Mega2 to 4 MB. TOS14--How to install TOS 1.4 6 chip set in a Mega ST. BLITZ--make your own analog disk copier. BLITTER UPGRADE--how to add a blitter to your rev B motherboard.

**#416: Clip Art and Time Works Borders.** four houses in GEM format, 5 houses in PI2 Degas format, 1 Atari Logo in GEM format, 10 borders in Timeworks DTP format, and 4 IMG pictures of dragons and wolves.

**#417D: Saturn.** Spectrum animation of Saturn. Requires 1 MB memory, color, and double-sided disk.

**#418D: Sequence Files.** Three animations: SKULL sequence--skull done with rez render. DALEK--animated Dalek from Dr. Who science fiction series. ZNETART--Z-Net logo bouncing off mirrored walls. Includes Animate4 sequence file player. 1 Mb required, DS drive.

**#419: Game Disk No. 23.** (Color): BLASTER--fast defender-like game. INVADERS--very hard variation of an arcade classic. ST-TETRIS--variation on Tetris game..

Order disks from CN Library,  
122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA  
22170. Disks are \$4.00 each.  
Add \$1/(6 disks) for S&H up to a  
max of \$6.00. Quantity discounts:

10 disks for \$35

35 disks for \$100

50 disks for \$150

These disks contain Mac programs for use with the SPECTRE Macintosh emulator. Disks are \$4 ea (10 for \$35). Order from CN Library, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA 22170. Add \$1 for every 6 disks for S&H. A "D" next to the disk number, indicates a "double-sided" disk, e.g. S3D. (Disks require 128K ROMS)

**S1: MacWrite 5.0 Demo**---(Cannot print/save but can load and read doc files.)

**S2: MacPaint 2.0 Demo**---(Cannot print/save files but can load, view & create them.)

**S3D: Red Ryder 9.4**---Powerful telecommunications program. Docs, utilities included.

**S4D: Aldus Freehand Demo**---A Video-works II interactive demonstration of Freehand drawing program.

**S5: Games #1**---Banzai, Monopoly 4.0, ATC 4.0, Mines, New Daleks, Brickles 4.0

**S6D: PowerPoint Demo**---(64K ROMs Compatible) Fully working demo version of this popular Mac program for planning, composing, and creating complete presentations.

**S7: Games #2**---Space Bubbles, Stratego, Investigator #1, Towers of Hanoi, Marienbad.

**S8: Image Studio Demo**---(Does not save) A photo retouching lab, modify digitized images in 65 grey scale levels.

**S9: Telecom #1**---Stuffit 1.51, Stuffit Users Guide, Freeterm 2.0, Freeterm 2.0 Documentation, TermWorks 1.3, Packet III ver 1.3.

**S10D: Stacks #1**---Concentration, HyperGunshy, Dinosaurs, AutoStack, Home 1.2.

**S11: Utilities #1**---MacEnvy, Benchmark, DiskTimer II, SampleIt 1.21, SampleIt Docs, Apfont 3.2, HierDA, Fever, OnCue 1.3 DEMO, ScreenDump II, Findswell 2.0 Demo

**S12D: Full Impact Demo**---Great spreadsheet program. (No save feature.)

**S13D: Stacks #2**---VisualStack, Chem Flash Cards, DisplayPict 1.4, Indigo Gets Out, AutCat, Animal Stack, Comic, OnTheBeach, Name That Plane.

**S14: Utilities #2**---Big Das runner, Mac II Icons, DiskParam, Utilities 1.5.1 Guide, Unstuffit DA 1.5.1, Auto Unstuffit Installer 1.5, Repair 1.2, ICON Designer, Viewer 1.5.1, SuperClock 3.1, SuperClock Doc ToMultiFinder, Interferon 3.1.

**S15: Games #3**---Darts, MacCamelot, BricklesPlus, Gravitation 4.0, SwampLord

**S16: DAs #1**---NekoDA, BezierDa and Docs, SnapShotDA 1.2, Adventure, VirusDetective, BreakKey, SysErrTableDA, PinUp Clock DA, Freemem, New Scrapbook DA

**S17: Sounds #1**---SoundMaster w/22 sound files for use w/V1.9 of Spectre.

**S18: Graphics #1**---1Dmata, Dafx 1.32, 3dEDIT, Fly Saver, Kaleidoscope, Optical, Pattern Blocks, Rae, Turbo View 1.01, MacPaint Shortcuts, Desktop Shortcuts.

**S19D: Hyper Utilities #1**---Deprotect Stack, XPICt, Moving Cursors Tutorial, Button Manager, Stack Compacter, Field Line Numberer, CardMover, Six Little Goodies, MH PowerScripts Sample, ShowDialog1.5.

**S20D: MacDraw II Demo**---VideoWorks format provides tour of latest features.

**S21: Utilities #3**---File Scan, Jaws Icon, File Master Icon, File Monster Doc, SnapShot Installer, Black Hole 6.0.2, Looney Tunes Icons, Dog Trash Icon, Shredder Icon, UDS/M1.1, Virus RX 1.4a2, System Font. Some icon files require ResEdit for installation.

**S22: Sword of Siegfried**---Graphics/text adventure (requires V1.9 of Spectre).

**S23: Sounds #2**---Sound files may also be used w/SoundMaster on #S17. (10000 Marbles, Any Sound 1, Any Sound 2, Bad Disk 1, BVad Disk 2, Beep, Beep Sound 1, Disk Sounds 1-4, Don't Worry Be Happy, Ka-Chung!, Rolling Your Own, Type Key 1, Type Return 1, Type Space 1.)

**S24: Games #4**---Dragon 2, Zoony, MazerLazer, and demo of ShufflePuck.

**S25D: MacMoney Demo**---Personal finance program, prints but does not save.

**S26: Fkeys #1**---23 fkeys and fkey related applications (Analog Clock, Clock, CopyDisk 3.0, Craps, F-KEY Installer, FadeKey, FileInfo, fkey, Fkey File Installer, Fkey-DA Sampler 2, FkeyView 2.5, FullMoon Calendar, InfoKey, LaunchKey, MacAlmanac, Pipeline, ResCViewer 4.5, SafeLaunch 2.2, SpaceWarp, StripTease, Unpack, Ver Reader 3.0 and Windows.

**S27: Games #5**---3D Checkers V2.0, Ballistics 2.0, Consternation 1.0, HangMan, Peg Puzzle Pak, UnBreakout.

**S28: Database Builder Demo**---Full featured database in a Desk Accessory.

**S29: Sounds #3**---Talking Moose 1.21 and 9 sound resources for MacCD (#S23) or SoundMaster (#S17)---Archie, Bad Disk 3, Beep Sound 2, Disk Sound 5, Disk Sound 6, Key Click 1, Oh Yeaahh!, Mac Sound 1, and Startup Sound 1.

**S30: Utilities #4**---Init Cdev, Assassin, BundAid, Curse the Finder, Easy Icon, Finder Cursor Icons, Finder Icons, HD Mini-Icon, IconManager 1.1, JerryCan, Murphy Init, NeVR Init, ScrollMBAR CDev, System Icons+, Version Sleuth 1.0, What, and Windows.

**S31: DAs #2**---Address Book 1.1.2 w/docs, Artist+ 2.01 w/docs, BlackJack, Calc 3.0, Calendar 1.7, Catch, cCAD 3.0 w/docs, Diskinfo 1.2, Maxwell 2.2a, MegaCalculator, SuperHelp w/docs, VirusDetective 2.2.1 w/docs, and windows.

**S32: VideoWorks w/Sound**---6 VW animations w/player, sound resources, and MacinTalk (1 Mac to go, Apollo, Marbles, People Wall, ShortStop, and The Cauldron.)

**S33D: HyperUtilities #2**---GetString XFCN, HyperScrap, LockField, PluckString XFCN, Recover, Script Lister, Script Access, Stack Analyzer, Stak-X Demo, Unity, Virus Encyclopedia, XFCN miscellany, Zoomer XCFN).

**S34: Excel Templates #1**---Macro, Amort, Sch, Apod 1.0, Budget, Checkbook, Clock.CH, Clock.MS, Clock.WS, Commands, DB.Form, Excel Budget, Expenses, Exps, Inc, IRA, Load Calc Master2, Load MaxTime 2, Matrix, MortAmt.MS 3.0, Replace, Savings Account, BioChart, BioRhythm.

**S35D: HyperStacks #3**---Atoms, Bird Stack II, Helicopter Stack, HyperIRA, Scan Stack 3.

**S36: Sounds #4**---Includes A Wish, I don't know, I know you are, Mecca jumbi, Need Input!, Unacceptable, Ax Headroom, Cheap-Beep, Ayaaaah!, Boom!, aoooooh, game over man, monkey, and vulcan mind.

**S37D: HyperStacks #4**---StackArt Vol. 1 (100 clip art pics).

**S38: Games #6**---Cairo Shootout 1.2a, Puzzl 1.1, and Stunt Copter 2.0.

**S39: Utilities #5**---Init Cdev 2.0, About IOnit Cdev 2.0, Moire Cdev, Moire Screen

Saver Docs, Moire Cdev to Init, Hierda .9983, RAM check, SnapJot, SuperClock 3.4, Time-piece, Virus Detective 3.0.1, Wind Chooser 1.0.1, Why 1.0.1, QuickKeys demo.

**S40D: HyperUtilities #3**---Christopher's XSTAK4, How a Virus Works, IConjurer, and Progress XCMD 1.1.

**S41: Productivity #1**---Albun Tracker 2.0.1, Amortize 2.4, Check Book 2.0, Road Atlas, and Smallview 1.3.

**S42: Productivity #2**---Address List 1.5.2, BiPlane 1.0.1 (spreadsheet), Doctor 2.35 (makes self launching documents), and Mac Mailing 1.4S (mailist program).

**S43: VideoWorks w/Sound #2**---Hello Amiga, MacPaint Vid, Movies 3, My1stVid, Trash, Vamp NY 1, and China Doll. Requires V1.0 or higher of Spectre.

**S44: Utilities #6**---Black Box 1.5, Complete Delete, Earth Init, FFDA Sampler, File Fixer, IconWrap Init, Macify 2.5, MacSpeed, Repair 1.4, Rescue, Scrolling Menu Installer, Shredder 6.0, SystemVersion, TextDiff, TFinder 2.2, ToMultifinder 2.3, Vaccine 1.01, and Version Reader 2.2.

**S45: Graphics #2**---MandelZot 1.4.1, Micro Swarm, Notebook 1.0, NoteNote5, Pyre-Works, ScanPaint, SelectPaint, ViewPaint 1.7.

**S46: Everyman 1**---Graphics/text adventure. Requires V1.9 or higher of Spectre.

**S47D/S48D: Phoenix**---interactive adventure game based on the movies 2001 and 2010. Requires Spectre V1.9 or higher and 2 DS drives or Hard disk.

**S49: Lawn Zapper**---arcade type game. (Requires V1.9 or higher of Spectre.)

**S50: Dungeons of Doom, V5.4.** Interactive adventure game based on Dungeons and Dragons.

**S51D: Postscript Fonts #1**---11 postscript fonts: Archimedes Border, Bills' Dingbats, Classic Heavy, Classic Italic, Classic Roman, Draftman, Faust, Gordon, Style, Tiny Helvetica, and Toulouse Lautrec.



**NOTE:** The following disks from our library of **Magic disks** for use with the Magic Sac Macintosh emulator also work with Spectre.

**M5: Disk Librarian** (includes complete listing of CN Magic & Spectre libraries), M12: MacBillBoard, M19: Pinball Construction Set Games, M29: PCS Games #2

**Adventure Games:** M17: Dungeons of Doom 4.0, M23: Vampire Castle, M24: Deep Angst, 1 Mb, M31: Black Wizard, M36: Castle of Ert, M40: Hack, Version 1.03, M41: Radical Castle, M63D: Mountain of Mayhem, M65D: Deep Angst II, M66: Intruder.

**Font Disks:** M13: Fonts #1, M14: Fonts #2, M16: Fonts #3, M32: Fonts #4, M35: Fonts #5, M42: Fonts #6, M44: Fonts #7, M50: Fonts #8, M61: Fonts #9, M64: Fonts #10, M67: Fonts #11

**Clip Art Disks:** M33: Clip Art #1, M52: Clip Art #2, M55: Clip Art #3

**Commercial Demos:** M37: Mac-A-Mug Pro Demo, M38: Video Works Player #1, M39: Demo Disk #2: Anatomiser, DeskPaint, and SuperPaint, M54: Design Demo Disk, M59D: Demo Disk #3: Kaleidagraph, Geographics II, M62: Demo Disk #4: Math Blaster, Blob Manager Demo.

**Hypercard Disks:** M48D: HyperStacks #1, M49D: HyperStacks #2, M56D: HyperStacks #3

# Current Notes' Registered Atari Clubs

Members of registered clubs may subscribe to Current Notes at a discount rate (\$20/year or \$38/2 years). To add your club to the list, send an initial subscription list of 10% of the members or 6 members whichever is less, to CN Registered Clubs, 122 N. Johnson Rd., Sterling, VA 22170. For more information, call Joyce (703) 450-4761. NOTE: Canadian Atari clubs are also eligible and Canadian club rates are \$28/year or \$54/2 years)

## ALABAMA

Huntsville AUG, Levin Soule, 3911 W. Crestview, Huntsville 35816 (205) 534-1815.

## ARIZONA

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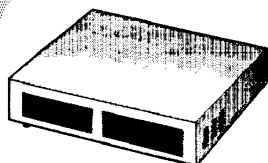
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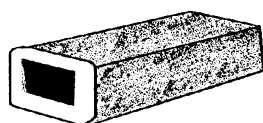
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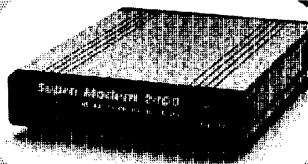
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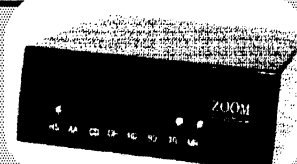
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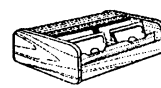
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